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THE
COURSE OF TIME.

A Poem.

By ROBERT POLLOK, A.M.

WITH

AN ENLARGED INDEX, A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,
AN INTRODUCTORY NOTICE,

AND

An Analysis Prefixed to Each Book.

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MEMOIR.

THE REV. ROBERT POLLOK was born at Muirhouse, parish of Eaglesham, about eleven miles southeast from Glasgow, October 19, 1798. He was the youngest son of a very worthy and intelligent farmer, who still resides in the same place. His early days were spent with his father in such occupations as the seasons and the situation demanded. His education was such as is common for the children of that class of people in Scotland to which the parents belonged. Being always fond of reading, he devoted to it the winter's evenings, instead of wasting them in frivolous amusements.

In his fourteenth year he was sent to the village of Eaglesham, to learn the business of a cartwright. But an elder brother, who was pursuing his studies for the ministry, it is said, advised him to abandon mechanical pursuits, and prepare for the same holy office. The plan was favored by his parents, and in 1813 he commenced the study of the Latin language in a school in the parish of Fenwick. In Oct., 1815, he was admitted to the University of Glasgow, where, having attended the classes five years, he received the degree of Master of Arts at the age of twenty-two. Here he was a diligent and exemplary student, stood very high in the estimation of his teachers, and obtained several prizes, which were awarded to him by his fellows. Before finishing his literary course, he suffered considerably from

impaired health; but does not seem to have suspected that he was preparing to be a victim of intense application.

In the autumn of 1822, he became a student of theology in the seminary of the United Secession Church, under the Rev. Dr. Dick, of Glasgow. He attended, also, the theological lectures of Dr. Macgill in the University. The discourses prepared by him, according to the requirements of the Divinity Hall, attracted notice; but were by some of his fellow-students severely criticised; because it was impossible for a genius like Pollok's to trammel itself by those rules of division and arrangement, which are of indispensable necessity to common minds, and which are generally important in a sermon, in order to aid the apprehension and the memory of the hearers. After the usual attendance at the Hall of five sessions, he was licensed to preach, at the same time with his brother, in May, 1827, by the United Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh.

It was about this time that his Poem was published, in the preparation of which, he had been much engaged, it is said, during the two preceding years.

His first public discourse was delivered at Rose Street Chapel, Edinburgh, of which the Rev. John Brown is minister. It was on the afternoon of Thursday, the third of May, the day of humiliation and prayer, before the celebration of the communion. The text was, 1 Kings, xviii. 21. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The sermon is said to have been in some parts awfully grand, and to have produced a most deep impression. "Many, we* doubt not, who heard him that day, will recollect the profound and eloquent discourse, which he delivered, in which there was a brilliant display of poetical imagery, combined with metaphysical acuteness and admirable reasoning; and many, we doubt not, will recollect his feeble appearance, and the exhaustion

* London Memoir.

which was apparent ere he closed. Alas! disease was then making rapid inroads on his constitution, and his public ministrations were soon to end forever." Such was the fatigue occasioned by this single exertion, that he was immediately confined to his bed; and, although in a few days he was partially restored, he preached afterwards only three times.

It was soon manifest to all but himself that an insidious consumption had been preying upon his constitution. "In the summer he removed from Edinburgh to Slateford, a most romantic village in the parish of St. Cuthbert's, delightfully situated on the rivulet called the Water of Leith, about three miles from the city. There, in the family of the Rev. Dr. Belfrage, minister of the United Congregation of Slateford, he was received with the utmost affection and respect. The salubrity of the air, and particular attention to diet, it was fondly anticipated, would restore him to vigor, especially as he had youth and the advantage of the season in his favor. The well known medical reputation of Dr. Belfrage, too, was fortunate for him in this delightful retirement. Finding, however, that his health was not returning, he was, during the summer, induced to take an easy tour to Aberdeen, in the hope that change of air and scene might recruit his exhausted frame. But the expectations of his friends were disappointed. He returned, and it was evident that disease was quickly hastening him to the grave."

The treatment which he received at this time shows in what estimation he was held by those who knew him. "During Mr. Pollok's residence at Slateford, he experienced the utmost kindness and attention from a gentleman of the most distinguished reputation in the metropolis, Dr. Abercromby. This gentleman frequently visited him, and tendered his medical advice with his friendly conversation. Many others in the metropolis, both laity and clergy of various denominations, also evinced their respect for him by their solici-

tations. Among the former, the Right Hon. Sir John Sinclair, who, at a public dinner, expressed his opinion of the 'COURSE OF TIME,' and the family of Dr. Monro of the University of Edinburgh, ought not to be forgotten." "His friends and fellow-students in Edinburgh also frequently visited him, and cheered him by their conversations on former days." "Of the kindness of Dr. Belfrage, Mr. Pollok always spoke with the most grateful enthusiasm. During his residence at Slateford, that gentleman acted toward him as a father and a friend. Every thing which was thought conducive to his comfort was at his command."

But the assiduities of friends were unavailing. "The summer hastened on, and Mr. Pollok was still the subject of disease. It was now thought necessary that a change of climate should be tried, and it was anticipated that the salubrious air of Italy might restore him to health. The city of Pisa, in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, was the place selected for his residence. To a mind like his, deeply stored with classical learning, and capable of appreciating the scenes of that delightful country, such a residence must have possessed the highest interest." Having made suitable preparations, and procured letters to learned men on the Continent, he left Scotland in the month of August, accompanied by his sister. "He proceeded by sea to England, and went first to Plymouth; but the state of his health rendered it impossible for him to go forward, and only the hope remained that if spared till the next summer, he would perhaps be enabled to complete his journey. He therefore took up his residence near Southampton, at Devonshire Place, Shirley Common." Soon, however, all hopes failed, and he wrote to his brother in Scotland respecting his situation, and observed to his sister, that he should not have left his home had he been aware of the state of his disease. Having lingered a few days, he expired on the 13th of September, 1827; and before his brother arrived, his remains were deposited in the

grave. His death was that of the true Christian, characterized by a calm faith in the religion he had preached, and a cheerful hope in that redemption, which had been the theme of his song.

The character of one thus cut off in the very moment, in which he was bursting from obscurity into the full glory that now rests upon his memory, it may be difficult to delineate. "His friends, public and private, can bear testimony to his many virtues. His excellence lay not in ostentation, but in the quiet and unobtrusive feelings of the heart. His disposition was generous, his heart, feeling and benevolent; and he loved his friends with that affection which is cherished only by a noble mind." "In his intercourse with his friends and familiar acquaintance,* he was cheerful and light-hearted; and this disposition he retained till disease had altogether disorganized his nervous system. But, like most men of studious habits, he wore an air of distance and reserve, when in the company of strangers." "His religion was that of the heart; he was pious, devout, humble, free from the conceits of a fancied perfection, and the impulses of a heated enthusiasm. His mind was cast in too noble a mould to be impressed by the petty distinctions and animosities of sectarian prejudice, and his integrity rose superior to the hollow and superficial affectation of a spurious liberality."

"His habits† were those of a close student; his reading was extensive; he could converse on almost every subject; and had great facility in composition. His college acquaintances could perceive that his mind was not wholly devoted to the business of the classes; he was constantly writing or reading on other subjects. It was his custom to commit to the flames, every now and then, a great number of papers. Besides the regular exercises, he composed a number for his own

* Magazine of Ref. D Church.

† Christian Review

pleasure and improvement, and several of these were poetical."

"Literary industry and solitary musing were not deemed the most important avocations in his father's house; and intrusions on his meditations at home often induced him to go elsewhere to muse. On these occasions, he often retreated to a neighboring farm, where a beautiful clump of fir-trees relieved the nakedness of a spot naturally uninviting. There, seated under the fairest of these, he composed a considerable part of his Poem. At a little distance in front, though entirely out of sight, a crystal stream of water gushed from a water-spout into a pleasant well, and thence pursued its course without a murmur through the low-lying meadows. The simple music of this little waterfall, mingled at times with the voice of the wind, as it rose or fell among the branches of the fir-trees, awakened emotions, to which may be ascribed a portion of that enthusiasm, which infused animation and wildness into his cherished melancholy. From this seclusion, he had a full view of the 'battlement of hills' formed by the lofty 'Ben Lomond' and other mountains, stretching beyond Dumbarton. At the south-east end of his father's house stand the trees which he celebrates in his verse. It is said that many a time he had been seen gazing upon them long and silently, and at length turning from them with an air of gladdened pensiveness, indicating the elevated feelings, which, by some mysterious sympathy, they had excited.

"Mr. Pollok's mind was certainly of a very superior order; of this, there need no other proof be given than the encomiums, which his 'Course of Time' has called forth—encomiums, many of them penned before his death was known, but which did not appear till after he had gone beyond the reach of earthly applause."

This Poem, although of the four last books he is said to have written nearly a thousand lines weekly, had long occu-

pied his thoughts. The idea was conceived fourteen years before its publication, when he was a mere youth. "The reception it has met with from the public, is a sufficient testimony to the talents of its lamented author. His name is now recorded among the list of those illustrious Scotsmen, who have done honor to their country; who, from obscurity, have secured for themselves an unfading reputation; and who will be remembered by distant generations with enthusiasm and admiration."

Previously to the "Course of Time," three Sabbath School Tales, written by him while a student of divinity, were published anonymously, entitled, "Helen of the Glen," "Ralph Gemmell" and the "Persecuted Family." The two latter are considered as the better specimens of his genius. "Ralph Gemmell" is properly a tale of the imagination; "The Persecuted Family" is a narrative, the different parts of which are asserted by the Author to be severally true, although he does not pretend that they happened in the very same relation which he has given them. They both relate to events most intensely interesting in the history of Scotland—the sufferings of the Presbyterians in the seventeenth century. Pollok was a native of one of the districts where the cruelties were practised, which here disgraced the memory of the persecutors, and caused the names of the pious and patriotic victims to be handed down in traditionary story; and he seems to have formed a just conception of the character of the men who thus suffered wrong for conscience' sake, and to have cherished a most lively sense of their eminent worth. "Every sigh," says he in his Preface to the "Persecuted Family," "every sigh of our persecuted ancestors is recorded in heaven; every tear which they shed is preserved in the bottle of God. Why then should not their memories be dear to us, for whom they bled, and for whom they died? But it is not only that we may pay them our debt of gratitude, that we ought to acquaint ourselves with

their lives ; it is that we may gather humility from their lowliness ; faith from their trust in God ; courage from their heaven-sustained fortitude ; warmth from the flame of their devotion, and hope from their glorious success."

Another work he had projected, which it is a cause of sincere regret that he did not live to execute. It was a work requiring genius, learning, and piety in the author, and which could not be properly accomplished without extraordinary fidelity and patience. We think it, however, no small honor to him, both as a scholar and a Christian, that he had conceived the idea of "A Review of Literature in all ages, designed to show, that literature must stand or fall in proportion as it harmonizes with Scripture Revelation."

We close our glance at the life, character, and works of Pollok, with the language of one, who "loved him while he lived," and to whose brief Memoir we have been so much indebted in preparing it : "He has gone the way of all the earth ; and his spirit, we fondly hope, is among the 'spirits of the just made perfect,' who, 'by faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises.' But he lives in the hearts of his friends, who think of him with fond regret ; he lives in the hearts of his countrymen ; and his praise is not only in the church of which he was a licentiate, but in all the churches."

INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

THE "Course of Time" was published near the time of the Author's death. It appeared before the public in a manner somewhat singular, without "apology, proem, argument, or table of contents," with no previous notice, no introduction, no dedication, nothing but its naked self, "A Poem in ten Books." It could not fail, however, to attract the attention of those, who knew how to estimate the preëminent worth of piety and genius combined. The enthusiastic approbation of the English Eclectic Review first awakened interest respecting it in this country, and prepared the way for its eager reception.

What the decision of the professed literary critics will be is yet uncertain. No one of the brotherhood has condescended to utter his oracle, and we will not predict whether any one will do it. But it will not surprise us, if this Poem shall be assailed with a storm of severest criticism.*

For, in the first place, it has many faults. He who chooses may put his finger with a complacent sneer upon bad conceptions, bad figures, bad verse, bad syntax. He can cheer his eye with spots, where he may venture to write "frigid,"

* Since this was written, the "Course of Time" has been violently censured in some of the publications of the day. But it has been reviewed more fully in the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, *Southern Quarterly*, and *Western Review*, by each of which its high merit is acknowledged.

“prosaic.” There are pages on which, if he has a pencil for such service, he may draw dark lines for defects and blemishes. The whole Poem gives proof, that the author scarcely devoted a moment, if he had opportunity, to the duty or drudgery of revision. Every thing dropped from his pen just as it burst on his thought, and is printed just as it was first penned. You have the exact strain poured forth under the original impulses of his inspiration, as he took the harp, and “rolled its numbers down the tide of Time.”

In the next place, the fiction of the Poem is exceedingly simple, and perhaps will not comport with the received idea of an Epic. The whole story may be given in a sentence.—Many ages after the end of our world, a Spirit from one of the numerous worlds existing in space, on his flight towards Heaven, discovers the abode of lost men in Hell; reaching Heaven, he inquires of Two Spirits, who welcome his arrival there, what is the meaning of the wretchedness he had just witnessed; the Two, unable fully to answer, conduct the inquirer to a Bard who once lived on Earth, and he, in answering their inquiries, relates the history of man from the Creation to the Judgment.—Now here is no labyrinth of incident, no plot, no hero, no struggle against fated will of gods or wrath of men. And devoted admirers of classical rules may complain of this, and censure Pollok as having no conception of the genuine epic; especially as they may appeal to so illustrious an example as Milton to sanction their views of what is essential to epic composition. But we beg leave to say, that we consider Milton’s adherence to pagan models, and imitation of heathen fictions, as an actual, and very unfortunate blemish in his exquisite poem; and most deeply is it to be regretted, that, to every reader of *Paradise Lost*, Satan appears to such a degree the Hero of the story, and is so exhibited, that the character of “High Archangel ruined,” wearing still “excess of glory obscured,” has too much power to win the sympathy and the admiration, and to keep out of

sight the character of Arch-fiend, foe of God and man. It is one of the points on which the 'Course of Time' preëminently deserves approbation, that it rises so fearlessly above the old artificial prescriptions for making up a poem; that it does not stoop to gather fictions, which, to put them at the best, are frivolous and useless; that, to secure interest and effect, it has not borrowed the miserable machinery of the stage, but rested wholly upon the intrinsic, incommunicable power of momentous reality. And if it be not shaped, in "beginning, middle, and end," exactly according to the laws of Aristotle's or Horace's Art of Poetry, we do not think it a deed of trespass unpardonable. Yet, we apprehend, others may.

There is a still more important reason for apprehending that the 'Course of Time' will by many be condemned, or, at least, much undervalued. The poetry is in the purest and highest sense religious. Its selectest topics are sacred. Its beauty, its sublimity, its pathos, is the peculiar beauty, and sublimity, and pathos felt by pious minds. The inspiration of genius blazes and burns along the lines; but it is not an inspiration kindled chiefly by philosophy, or taste, or classic study, or mere poetic observation of nature; it is the holy rapture which glows in the bosom of him, who has an eye of Faith, and a heart new stamped with the image of the Eternal Excellence. While, therefore, the poetry has a thrilling charm in its spirit, which bears up to the very throne of God every soul in which it strikes a responsive chord, and communicates to such a taste of joys feebly imaged by the crystal water and fruited tree of life, there is a class of readers, we fear not small, who cherish none of the sympathies, with which its choicest notes are in unison. There is in the Poem much of that, which will necessarily waken, in every cultivated mind, high and delightful emotions of taste. But its principal value lies not in this. Its greatest merit, its crowning excellence, consists in its exhibiting in the author, and addressing

in the reader, with such inexpressible felicity, the peculiar emotions of those, who can sing of Redeeming Love. And to judge properly of such poetry, no matter what other characteristics it may possess, requires a *tuning of soul* never enjoyed, probably never desired, possibly never thought of, and most certainly never justly conceived, by many who sit in the seat of the learned, and wield the pen of the critic, and count it fitting that they should guide the public in matters of literature.

Finally, we are not without expectation that the conscience-riving gleam and flash of truth, which bursts so often and vividly from the verse of Pollok, will arouse the hostility of hearts not subject to the law of God. There is not merely the glowing of a seraphic fervor, that rises altogether above the experience and the sympathies of the unsanctified spirit; there is not merely a beauty and a glory, which lie hid from the discernment of the natural man; but there is also a lucid, bold, cogent, resistless demonstration of revealed truth; we do not mean *argumentative*, which too often only "plays round the head," and "comes not near the heart," but what is better, *poetical* demonstration; a full, bright, vivacious *showing* of it in something of its native colorings and native power to take hold of men's feelings. Here is the Genius of Poetry wielding the Sword of the Spirit. The author deals not in dreamy fable, ingenious theory, vapid sentiment, or fanciful description; he echoes the simple, sublime, holy, penetrating truth of the Eternal Word. He pours from his harp the streams of Heaven's burning logic. They may not carry conviction to the biased understanding, but must often roll a scorching fire in upon the guilty conscience. We shall not think it strange, if such poetry be spoken against.

But whether this Poem shall be left uncensured to its glory, or encounter high attempts to obscure its worth, it will live. It is not an ephemera. It has in it the seeds of immortality. It is neither secondary nor primary shining with borrowed lustre.

It is a Sun. Spots we see upon it; but it is a sun; a fountain rich of holy, poetic light, whence "other stars may fill their golden urns." The name of the Author will hereafter be associated with those of the noblest bards of England; even cold and careless readers will often mention it together with Cowper and Milton; and there will seldom be wanting those who will decidedly prefer the poetry of Pollok, "uttering as 'tis, the essential truth."

One ground of our prediction is, as just stated, the inherent excellence of the work as a mere effusion of poetical talent, It has a reach and grasp, a fearless independence, an original, enchaining power of thought, possessed only by gifted minds. It is studded with pearls not to be gathered in common depths, nor borne from their recesses by common hands. Its very faults indicate the locality of genius; they are the baser substances, which enter into the precious ore.

The interest of the subject, also, is permanent. The Author sings the Destiny of Man. The theme is invested, not only with all the sublimities of Eternity, but also with all the personalities of individual Retribution. It addresses not the sympathies of a hero, or a patriot, or a lover of nature, as such; of European or American, bond or free, cultivated or rude. These are the accidentals of human nature, which change with circumstances and times. It speaks to the Immortal; to the Something Divine within, which ever whispers of weal or wo to be hereafter in an unending future.

Moreover, the poetry is such in its spirit as coming ages will specially demand. The purifying waters, which the Gospel is now pouring over the world, will not cease to flow, when the idol temple, and the crescent and minaret of the false prophet, are trodden in the dust. A change is to be wrought in the commerce, the politics, and the literature of the Christian nations. Shame and sorrow belong to all who use the English language, that, even in this, the literature thus far has exhibited, predominantly, a spirit so utterly at va-

riance with the spirit of the gospel, or at least so utterly destitute of that spirit. We are of those who freely profess to believe, that man's intellect is to reach its highest and noblest, as well as purest, energies, in its nearest moral conformity to God, the First, Infinite, Eternal Intellect; and that the gospel, just in proportion as the receiver and disciple yields himself to its guidance, carries the intellect upward in this holy approximation. The literature, to which minds thus elevated and inspired give birth, must excel all other; and such alone, unquestionably, will be adapted to the demands of an age, in which the mass of mind shall be controlled by the principles of the Bible. Such a literature has not existed, has not been desired. Men have seemed to consider a cultivated literature and a spiritual religion as incompatible. It has been gravely said, that a man of ardent piety cannot produce a work that will live in after ages. We pronounce this a libel upon the Author of the human mind and the Sanctifier of the human heart. Christianity does, indeed, humble the pride of ambition, and forbid the destined companion of un-fallen angels to waste his redeemed and regenerated energies upon an intellectual toy to amuse the ungodly sons of Time; but, in the same act, it opens to him a fount of inspiration infinitely superior to comparison with the fabled haunts of Muses, and presents a field of mental effort broad as creation itself, with motives such as carried the Son of God to the Mediatorial Throne through a Manger and a bloody Cross. And we thank Heaven, that we see the dawning of new days; that *the life and immortality brought to light* is beginning, in a degree, and with a success most cheering, to spread its deep energy through several departments of social existence, from which it has been hitherto excluded.

Among the harbingers of better days to come in the history of refined literature, we joyfully hail the 'Course of Time.' It has the relish of a cluster from the promised land; and is an earnest of millennial poetry. It breathes out balmy air, like

breezes of the celestial City. It echoes thrilling music, as if from sainted choirs above, harping round the Throne. This poet drank not at pagan wells; but at the crystal spring where stood and drew the gifted seers and bards of Judah, there he quaffed deep and long the living waters. His spirit had an eye to see the Sun of Righteousness, and went up to "feed upon his beams." Soaring to the mount of God, he caught of its altar-fires. To himself may be applied, with as much justice as to the renowned Poet of whom they are written, his own words :—

The Bard, by God's own hand anointed, who
To Virtue's all-delighting harmony
His numbers tuned; who from the fount of truth
Poured melody, and beauty poured, and love,
In holy stream, into the human heart.

To such inspiration the millennial sons of genius, and lovers of poetry and letters, will not, we trust, be strangers, as we are. Under the regenerating and fertilizing influences of such an inspiration, we anticipate in the Reign of Peace a golden harvest of various literature. As a sort of first fruits of this, we commend to every reader the Poem which has occasioned our remarks. We dare offer it as a specimen of that which will accord with the taste of a fast-coming age, in which the unsanctified productions of licentious, infidel and impenitent genius will be impartially judged, and correctly estimated; and we dare urge its repeated perusal on every class of readers.

COURSE OF TIME.

Book II.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK I.

Invocation is made to the Eternal Spirit of Truth, and the subject of the Poem is stated.

Long after Time had ceased, and Eternity had rolled on its ages, two youthful sons of Paradise walk on the hills of immortality, enjoying holy converse. A stranger spirit from another world arrives, and is welcomed by them to the abodes of bliss. The stranger desires them to explain the wonderful things he had noticed in his flight from his native world to heaven. Having sailed through empty, nameless regions, where utter nothing dwelt, he suddenly came to a mountainous wall of fiery adamant, on which were horrid figures, traced in fire, imitating life. He entered within, and saw a wide lake of burning fire, and saw most miserable beings walking in the flames, burning continually, yet unconsumed. Filled with horror, he hastened from the dismal prison to the world of light, and now desired to understand this wondrous wretchedness. The Two, unable to explain it, and having their curiosity awakened, propose to visit an "ancient Bard of Earth," who often had sung on this subject to the admiring youth of heaven.

They find the Bard alone, in holy musing, and state to him their desire. He informs them that the prison described is Hell, and promises more fully to meet their curiosity by relating to them the *History of Man*.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book I.

ETERNAL SPIRIT! God of truth! to whom
All things seem as they are; Thou, who of old
The prophet's eye unscaled, that nightly saw,
While heavy sleep fell down on other men
In holy vision tranced, the future pass
Before him, and to Judah's harp attuned
Burdens which made the pagan mountains shake,
And Zion's cedars bow,—inspire my song;
My eye unscale; me what is substance teach,
And shadow what, while I of things to come, 10
As past, rehearsing, sing the Course of Time,
The second birth, and final doom of man.

The muse, that soft and sickly woos the ear
Of love, or, chanting loud in windy rhyme
Of fabled hero, raves through gaudy tale
Not overfraught with sense, I ask not: such
A strain befits not argument so high.
Me thought, and phrase severely sifting out
The whole idea, grant; uttering—as 'tis
The essential truth—time gone, the righteous saved, 20
The wicked damned, and providence approved

Hold my right hand, Almighty! and me teach
To strike the lyre, but seldom struck, to notes
Harmonious with the morning stars, and pure
As those by sainted bards and angels sung,

Which wake the echoes of Eternity ;
That fools may hear and tremble, and the wise,
Instructed, listen, of ages yet to come.

Long was the day, so long expected, past
Of the eternal doom, that gave to each 30
Of all the human race his due reward.
The sun, earth's sun, and moon, and stars, had ceased
To number seasons, days, and months, and years
To mortal man. Hope was forgotten, and fear :
And time, with all its chance, and change, and smiles,
And frequent tears, and deeds of villany,
Or righteousness, once talked of much, as things
Of great renown, was now but ill remembered ;
In dim and shadowy vision of the past
Seen far remote, as country, which has left 40
The traveller's speedy step, retiring back
From morn till even ; and long Eternity
Had rolled his mighty years, and with his years
Men had grown old. The saints, all home returned
From pilgrimage, and war, and weeping, long
Had rested in the bowers of peace, that skirt
The stream of life ; and long—alas ! how long
To them it seemed !—the wicked, who refused
To be redeemed, had wandered in the dark
Of hell's despair, and drunk the burning cup 50
Their sins had filled with everlasting wo

Thus far the years had rolled, which none but God
Doth number, when two sons, two youthful sons
Of Paradise, in conversation sweet,—
For thus the heavenly muse instructs me, wooed
At midnight hour with offering sincere
Of all the heart, poured out in holy prayer,—
High on the hills of immortality,
Whence goodliest prospect looks beyond the walls
Of heaven, walked, casting oft their eye far through 60
The pure serene, observant if, returned
From errand duly finished, any came,
Or any, first in virtue now complete,
From other worlds arrived, confirmed in good.

Thus viewing, one they saw, on hasty wing
 Directing towards heaven his course ; and now,
 His flight ascending near the battlements
 And lofty hills on which they walked, approached.
 For round and round, in spacious circuit wide,
 Mountains of tallest stature circumscribe 70
 The plains of Paradise, whose tops, arrayed
 In uncreated radiance, seem so pure,
 That naught but angel's foot, or saint's, elect
 Of God, may venture there to walk. Here oft
 The sons of bliss take morn or evening pastime,
 Delighted to behold ten thousand worlds
 Around their suns revolving in the vast
 External space, or listen the harmonies
 That each to other in its motion sings.
 And hence, in middle heaven remote, is seen 80
 The mount of God in awful glory bright.
 Within, no orb create of moon, or star,
 Or sun, gives light ; for God's own countenance,
 Beaming eternally, gives light to all.
 But farther than these sacred hills, his will
 Forbids its flow, too bright for eyes beyond.
 This is the last ascent of Virtue ; here
 All trial ends, and hope ; here perfect joy,
 With perfect righteousness, which to these heights
 Alone can rise, begins, above all fall. 90

And now, on wing of holy ardour strong,
 Hither ascends the stranger borne upright,—
 For stranger he did seem, with curious eye
 Of nice inspection round surveying all,—
 And at the feet alights of those that stood
 His coming, who the hand of welcome gave,
 And the embrace sincere of holy love ;
 And thus, with comely greeting kind, began.

Hail, brother ! hail, thou son of happiness,
 Thou son beloved of God ! welcome to heaven, 100
 To bliss that never fades ! thy day is past
 Of trial and of fear to fall. Well done,

Thou good and faithful servant ; enter now
 Into the joy eternal of thy Lord.
 Come with us, and behold far higher sight
 Than e'er thy heart desired, or hope conceived.
 See, yonder is the glorious hill of God,
 'Bove angel's gaze in brightness rising high.
 Come, join our wing, and we will guide thy flight
 To mysteries of everlasting bliss—
 The tree, and fount of life, the eternal throne, 110
 And presence chamber of the King of kings.
 But what concern hangs on thy countenance,
 Unwont within this place? Perhaps thou deemst
 Thyself unworthy to be brought before
 The always Ancient One. So are we, too,
 Unworthy ; but our God is all in all,
 And gives us boldness to approach his throne.

Sons of the Highest ! citizens of heaven !
 Began the new-arrived, right have ye judged . 120
 Unworthy, most unworthy is your servant,
 To stand in presence of the King, or hold
 Most distant and most humble place in this
 Abode of excellent glory unrevealed.
 But God Almighty be for ever praised,
 Who of his fulness, fills me with all grace
 And ornament, to make me in his sight
 Well pleasing, and accepted in his court.
 But, if your leisure waits, short narrative
 Will tell, why strange concern thus overhangs 130
 My face, ill seeming here ; and haply, too,
 Your elder knowledge can instruct my youth,
 Of what seems dark and doubtful, unexplained.

Our leisure waits thee. Speak ; and what we can,
 Delighted most to give delight, we will ;
 Though much of mystery yet to us remains.

Virtue, I need not tell, when proved and full
 Matured, inclines us up to God and heaven,
 By law of sweet compulsion strong and sure ;

As gravitation to the larger orb 140
 The less attracts, through matter's whole domain.
 Virtue in me was ripe. I speak not this
 In boast; for what I am to God I owe,
 Entirely owe, and of myself am naught.
 Equipped and bent for heaven, I left yon world,
 My native seat, which scarce your eye can reach,
 Rolling around her central sun, far out,
 On utmost verge of light. But first, to see
 What lay beyond the visible creation,
 Strong curiosity my flight impelled. 150
 Long was my way, and strange. I passed the bounds
 Which God doth set to light, and life, and love;
 Where darkness meets with day, where order meets
 Disorder, dreadful, waste, and wild; and down
 The dark, eternal, uncreated night
 Ventured alone. Long, long on rapid wing,
 I sailed through empty, nameless regions vast,
 Where utter Nothing dwells, unformed and void.
 There neither eye, no ear, nor any sense
 Of being most acute, finds object; there 160
 For aught external still you search in vain.
 Try touch, or sight, or smell; try what you will,
 You strangely find naught but yourself alone.
 But why should I in words attempt to tell
 What that is like, which is, and yet is not?
 This passed, my path, descending, led me still
 O'er unclaimed continents of desert gloom
 Immense, where gravitation shifting turns
 The other way; and to some dread, unknown,
 Infernal centre downward weighs: and now,— 170
 Far travelled from the edge of darkness, far
 As from that glorious mount of God to light's
 Remotest limb,—dire sights I saw, dire sounds
 I heard; and suddenly before my eye
 A wall of fiery adamant sprung up,
 Wall mountainous, tremendous, flaming high
 Above all flight of hope. I paused, and looked;
 And saw, where'er I looked upon that mound,
 Sad figures traced in fire, not motionless,

But imitating 'life. One I remarked 180
 Attentively ; but how shall I describe
 What naught resembles else my eye hath seen?
 Of worm or serpent kind it something looked,
 But monstrous, with a thousand snaky heads,
 Eyed each with double orbs of glaring wrath ;
 And with as many tails, that twisted out
 In horrid revolution, tipped with stings ;
 And all its mouths, that wide and darkly gaped,
 And breathed most poisonous breath, had each a sting,
 Forked, and long, and venomous, and sharp ; 190
 And, in its writhings infinite, it grasped
 Malignantly what seemed a heart, swollen, black,
 And quivering with torture most intense ;
 And still the heart, with anguish throbbing high,
 Made effort to escape, but could not ; for,
 Howe'er it turned—and oft it vainly turned—
 These complicated foldings held it fast.
 And still the monstrous beast with sting of head
 Or tail transpierced it, bleeding evermore.
 What this could image, much I searched to know ; 200
 And while I stood, and gazed, and wondered long.
 A voice—from whence I knew not, for no one
 I saw—distinctly whispered in my ear
 These words : This is the Worm that never dies.

Fast by the side of this unsightly thing
 Another was portrayed, more hideous still :
 Who sees it once shall wish to see't no more.
 For ever undescribed let it remain !
 Only this much I may or can unfold.
 Far out it thrust a dart that might have made 210
 The knees of Terror quake, and on it hung,
 Within the triple barbs, a being pierced
 Through soul and body both. Of heavenly make
 Original the being seemed, but fallen,
 And worn and wasted with enormous wo.
 And still, around the everlasting lance,
 It writhed, convulsed, and uttered mimic groans ;
 And tried and wished, and ever tried and wished

To die ; but could not die. Oh, horrid sight ! [220
I trembling gazed, and listened, and heard this voice
Approach my ear : This is Eternal Death.

Nor these alone. Upon that burning wall,
In horrible emblazonry, were limned
All shapes, all forms, all modes of wretchedness,
And agony, and grief, and desperate wo.
And prominent in characters of fire,
Where'er the eye could light, these words you read
" Who comes this way, behold, and fear to sin !"
Amazed I stood ; and thought such imagery
Foretokened, within, a dangerous abode. 230
But yet to see the worst a wish arose.
For virtue, by the holy seal of God
Accredited and stamped, immortal all,
And all invulnerable, fears no hurt
As easy as my wish, as rapidly,
I through the horrid rampart passed, unscathed
And unopposed ; and, poised on steady wing,
I hovering gazed. Eternal Justice ! sons
Of God ! tell me, if ye can tell, what then
I saw, what then I heard. Wide was the place, 240
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath, I saw a lake of burning fire,
With tempest tost perpetually, and still
The waves of fiery darkness 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke, and music made
Of melancholy sort ; and over head,
And all around, wind warred with wind, storm howled
To storm, and lightning forked lightning crossed,
And thunder answered thunder, muttering sounds
Of sullen wrath ; and far as sight could pierce, 250
Or down descend in caves of hopeless depth,
Through all that dungeon of unfading fire,
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed ;
For ever wasting, yet enduring still ;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.
Some wandered lonely in the desert flames,

And some in fell encounter fiercely met,
 With curses loud, and blasphemies, that made
 The cheek of Darkness pale; and as they fought, 260
 And cursed, and gnashed their teeth, and wished to die,
 Their hollow eyes did utter streams of wo.

And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
 That always sighed, and tears that ever wept,
 And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.

And Sorrow, and Repentance, and Despair,
 Among them walked, and to their thirsty lips
 Presented frequent cups of burning gall.

And as I listened, I heard these beings curse 270
 Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
 The earth, the resurrection morn, and seek,
 And ever vainly seek, for utter death.

And to their everlasting anguish still,
 The thunders from above responding spoke
 These words, which, through the caverns of perdition
 Forlornly echoing, fell on every ear:

"Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."

And back again recoiled a deeper groan.

A deeper groan! Oh, what a groan was that!

I waited not, but swift on speediest wing, 280

With unaccustomed thoughts conversing, back
 Retraced my venturous path from dark to light.

Then up ascending, long ascending up,
 I hasted on; though whiles the chiming spheres,

By God's own finger touched to harmony,

Held me delaying, till I here arrived,

Drawn upward by the eternal love of God,

Of wonder full and strange astonishment,

At what in yonder den of darkness dwells,

Which now your higher knowledge will unfold. 290

They answering said: To ask and to bestow
 Knowledge, is much of heaven's delight; and now
 Most joyfully what thou requir'st we would:
 For much of new and unaccountable
 Thou bring'st. Something indeed we heard before,
 In passing conversation slightly touched,

Of such a place ; yet, rather to be taught,
 Than teaching, answer, what thy marvel asks,
 We need ; for we ourselves, though here, are but
 Of yesterday, creation's younger sons. 300
 But there is one, an ancient bard of Earth,
 Who, by the stream of life, sitting in bliss,
 Has oft beheld the eternal years complete
 The mighty circle round the throne of God ;
 Great in all learning, in all wisdom great,
 And great in song ; whose harp in lofty strain
 Tells frequently of what thy wonder craves,
 While round him, gathering, stand the youth of heaven,
 With truth and melody delighted both.
 To him this path directs, an easy path, 310
 And easy flight will bring us to his seat.

So saying, they linked hand in hand, spread out
 Their golden wings, by living breezes fanned,
 And over heaven's broad campaign sailed serene.
 O'er hill and valley, clothed with verdure green,
 That never fades ; and tree, and herb, and flower,
 That never fades ; and many a river, rich
 With nectar, winding pleasantly, they passed ;
 And mansion of celestial mould, and work
 Divine. And oft delicious music, sung 320
 By saint and angel bands that walked the vales,
 Or mountain tops, and harped upon their harps,
 Their ear inclined, and held by sweet constraint
 Their wing ; not long, for strong desire awaked
 Of knowledge that to holy use might turn,
 Still pressed them on to leave what rather seemed
 Pleasure, due only when all duty's done.

And now beneath them lay the wished-for spot,
 The sacred bower of that renowned bard ;
 That ancient bard, ancient in days and song ; 330
 But in immortal vigour young, and young
 In rosy health ; to pensive solitude
 Retiring oft, as was his wont on earth.

Fit was the place, most fit, for holy musing.
 Upon a little mount, that gently rose,
 He sat, clothed in white robes; and o'er his head
 A laurel tree, of lustiest, eldest growth,
 Stately and tall, and shadowing far and wide,—
 Not fruitless, as on earth, but bloomed, and rich
 With frequent clusters, ripe to heavenly taste,— 340
 Spread its eternal boughs, and in its arms
 A myrtle of unfading leaf embraced—
 The rose and lily, fresh with fragrant dew,
 And every flower of fairest cheek, around
 Him, smiling flocked. Beneath his feet, fast by,
 And round his sacred hill, a streamlet walked,
 Warbling the holy melodies of heaven;
 The hallowed zephyrs brought him incense sweet;
 And out before him opened, in prospect long,
 The river of life, in many a winding maze 350
 Descending from the lofty throne of God,
 That with excessive glory closed the scene.

Of Adam's race he was, and lonely sat,
 By chance that day, in meditation deep,
 Reflecting much of time, and earth, and man.
 And now to pensive, now to cheerful notes,
 He touched a harp of wondrous melody.
 A golden harp it was, a precious gift,
 Which, at the day of judgment, with the crown
 Of life, he had received from God's own hand, 360
 Reward due to his service done on earth.

He sees their coming, and with greeting kind,
 And welcome, not of hollow forged smiles,
 And ceremonious compliment of phrase,
 But of the heart sincere, into his bower
 Invites. Like greeting they returned. Not bent
 In low obeisance, from creature most
 Unfit to creature; but with manly form
 Upright they entered in; though high his rank,
 His wisdom high, and mighty his renown. 370

And thus, deferring all apology,
The two their new companion introduced.

Ancient in knowledge ! bard of Adam's race !
We bring thee one, of us inquiring what
We need to learn, and with him wish to learn.
His asking will direct thy answer best.

Most ancient bard ! began the new-arrived,
Few words will set my wonder forth, and guide
Thy wisdom's light to what in me is dark.

Equipped for heaven, I left my native place. 380
But first beyond the realms of light I bent
My course ; and there, in utter darkness, far
Remote, I beings saw forlorn in wo,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed.
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept
And ever fell, but not in Mercy's sight.
And still I heard these wretched beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The earth, the resurrection morn, and seek, 390
And ever vainly seek, for utter death.
And from above the thunders answered still,
" Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
And every where, throughout that horrid den,
I saw a form of excellence, a form
Of beauty without spot, that naught could see
And not admire, admire and not adore.
And from its own essential beams it gave
Light to itself, that made the gloom more dark.
And every eye in that infernal pit 400
Beheld it still ; and from its face—how fair !
Oh, how exceeding fair !—for ever sought,
But ever vainly sought, to turn away.
That image, as I guess, was Virtue ; for
Naught else hath God given countenance so fair.
But why in such a place it should abide ?
What place it is ? What beings there lament ?

Whence came they ? and for what their endless groan ?
 Why curse they God ? why seek they utter death ?
 And chief, what means the resurrection morn ? 410
 My youth expects thy reverend age to tell.

Thou rightly deemst, fair youth, began the bard.
 The form thou sawst was Virtue, ever fair.
 Virtue, like God, whose excellent majesty,
 Whose glory virtue is, is omnipresent.
 No being, once created rational,
 Accountable, endowed with moral sense,
 With sapience of right and wrong endowed,
 And charged, however fallen, debased, destroyed ;
 However lost, forlorn, and miserable ; 420
 In guilt's dark shrouding wrapped however thick ,
 However drunk, delirious, and mad,
 With sin's full cup ; and with whatever damned,
 Unnatural diligence it work and toil,—
 Can banish Virtue from its sight, or once
 Forget that she is fair. Hides it in night,
 In central night ; takes it the lightning's wing,
 And flies for ever on, beyond the bounds
 Of all ; drinks it the maddest cup of sin ;
 Dives it beneath the ocean of despair ; 430
 It dives, it drinks, it flies, it hides in vain.
 For still the eternal beauty, image fair,
 Once stamped upon the soul, before the eye
 All lovely stands, nor will depart ; so God
 Ordains ; and lovely to the worst she seems,
 And ever seems ; and as they look, and still
 Must ever look, upon her loveliness,
 Remembrance dire of what they were, of what
 They might have been, and bitter sense of what
 They are, polluted, ruined, hopeless, lost, 440
 With most repenting torment rend their hearts.
 So God ordains, their punishment severe,
 Eternally inflicted by themselves.
 'Tis this, this Virtue, hovering evermore
 Before the vision of the damned, and, in
 Upon their monstrous moral nakedness

Casting unwelcome light, that makes their wo,
 That makes the essence of the endless flame.
 Where this is, there is hell, darker than aught
 That he, the bard three-visioned, darkest saw. 450

The place thou sawst was hell; the groans thou
 heardst
 The wailings of the damned, of those who would
 Not be redeemed, and at the judgment day,
 Long past, for unrepented sins were damned.
 The seven loud thunders which thou heardst, declare
 The eternal wrath of the Almighty God.
 But whence, or why they came to dwell in wo,
 Why they curse God, what means the glorious morn
 Of resurrection, these a longer tale
 Demand, and lead the mournful lyre far back 460
 Through memory of sin and mortal man.
 Yet haply not rewardless we shall trace
 The dark disastrous years of finished Time.
 Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy.
 Nor yet shall all be sad, for God gave peace.
 Much peace on earth, to all who feared his name.

But first it needs to say, that other style
 And other language than thy ear is wont,
 Thou must expect to hear—the dialect
 Of man. For each in heaven a relish holds 470
 Of former speech, that points to whence he came.
 But whether I of person speak, or place.
 Event or action, moral or divine;
 Or things unknown compare to things unknown;
 Allude, imply, suggest, apostrophize;
 Or touch, when wandering through the past, on moods
 Of mind thou never feltst;—the meaning still,
 With easy apprehension, thou shalt take.
 So perfect here is knowledge, and the strings
 Of sympathy so tuned, that every word 480
 That each to other speaks, though never heard
 Before, at once is fully understood,
 And every feeling uttered, fully felt.

So shalt thou find, as from my various song,
That backward rolls o'er many a tide of years,
Directly or inferred, thy asking, thou,
And wondering doubt, shalt learn to answer, while
I sketch in brief the history of man.

COURSE OF TIME.

Book II

ANALYSIS OF BOOK II.

The "ancient Bard" begins his story. He relates briefly the creation of the Earth, and of Man; the Apostasy; and the provision for Man's recovery through the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God. The inquiring spirit breaks out in rapturous admiration of Redeeming Love, expressing the supposition that the whole race of Adam must have availed themselves of its benefits. The Bard proceeds, correcting this mistake, and stating further the efforts on the part of God to secure the salvation of men, and the unwillingness of multitudes to receive mercy. The Bible, proceeding from God himself, was sent to them, containing a full exhibition of God's character and law; of man's character, condition, duty, and destiny; of the nature and tendency of sin, and of the method of final pardon; but many refused to regard this voice from heaven; many perverted its testimony; many, after extinguishing the light of revelation, yielded to impious idolatry. Some of the influences which operated to counteract the Bible are noticed; particularly the criminal abuse of office and authority, the admiration of philosophy and science, the love of pleasure and indolence. In conclusion, the "primal cause" and "fountain-head" of all the opposition manifested to God and to his revealed word is found in the Pride of the human heart.

THE
COURSE OF TIME

Book XX.

THIS said, he waked the golden harp, and thus,
While on him inspiration breathed, began.

As from yon everlasting hills that gird
Heaven northward, I thy course espied, I judge
Thou from the arctic regions came? Perhaps
Thou noticed on thy way a little orb,
Attended by one moon, her lamp by night,
With her fair sisterhood of planets seven,
Revolving round their central sun; she third
In place, in magnitude the fourth. That orb, 10
New made, new named, inhabited anew,—
Though whiles we sons of Adam visit still,
Our native place, not changed so far but we
Can trace our ancient walks, the scenery
Of childhood, youth, and prime, and hoary age,
But scenery most of suffering and wo,—
That little orb, in days remote of old,
When angels yet were young, was made for man,
And titled Earth, her primal virgin name;—
Created first so lovely, so adorned 20
With hill, and dale, and lawn, and winding vale,
Woodland, and stream, and lake, and rolling seas.

Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,
 And herb and flower ; so lovely, so adorned
 With numerous beasts of every kind, with fowl
 Of every wing and every tuneful note,
 And with all fish that in the multitude
 Of waters swam ; so lovely, so adorned,
 So fit a dwelling place for man, that, as
 She rose, complete, at the creating word, 30
 The morning stars, the sons of God, aloud
 Shouted for joy ; and God, beholding saw
 The fair design, that from eternity
 His mind conceived, accomplished, and, well pleased,
 His six days' finished work most good pronounced,
 And man declared the sovereign prince of all.

All else was prone, irrational, and mute,
 And unaccountable, by instinct led.
 But man He made of angel form erect,
 To hold communion with the heavens above ; 40
 And on his soul impressed his image fair,
 His own similitude of holiness,
 Of virtue, truth, and love ; with reason high
 To balance right and wrong, and conscience quick
 To choose or to reject ; with knowledge great,
 Prudence and wisdom, vigilance and strength,
 To guard all force or guile ; and, last of all,
 The highest gift of God's abundant grace,
 With perfect, free, unbiassed will. Thus man
 Was made upright, immortal made, and crowned 50
 The king of all ; to eat, to drink, to do
 Freely and sovereignly his will entire ;—
 By one command alone restrained, to prove,
 As was most just, his filial love sincere,
 His loyalty, obedience due, and faith.
 And thus the prohibition ran, expressed,
 As God is wont, in terms of plainest truth.

Of every tree that in the garden grows
 Thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree
 That knowledge hath of good and ill. eat not, 60

Nor touch; for in the day thou eatest, thou
 Shalt die. Go, and this one command obey,
 Adam, live and be happy, and, with thy Eve,
 Fit consort, multiply and fill the earth.

Thus they, the representatives of men,
 Were placed in Eden, choicest spot of earth.
 With royal honour and with glory crowned,
 Adam, the Lord of all, majestic walked,
 With godlike countenance sublime, and form
 Of lofty towering strength; and by his side 70
 Eve, fair as morning star, with modesty
 Arrayed, with virtue, grace, and perfect love
 In holy marriage wed, and eloquent
 Of thought and comely words, to worship God
 And sing his praise, the Giver of all good.
 Glad, in each other glad, and glad in hope;
 Rejoicing in their future happy race.

O lovely, happy, blest, immortal pair!
 Pleased with the present, full of glorious hope
 But short, alas! the song that sings their bliss! 80
 Henceforth the history of man grows dark!
 Shade after shade of deepening gloom descends,
 And Innocence laments her robes defiled.
 Who farther sings, must change the pleasant lyre
 To heavy notes of wo. Why! dost thou ask,
 Surprised? The answer will surprise thee more.
 Man sinned; tempted, he ate the guarded tree;—
 Tempted of whom thou afterwards shalt hear;—
 Audacious, unbelieving, proud, ungrateful, 90
 He ate the interdicted fruit, and fell;
 And in his fall, his universal race;
 For they in him by delegation were,
 In him to stand or fall, to live or die.

Man most ingrate! so full of grace, to sin,
 Here interposed the new-arrived, so full
 Of bliss, to sin against the Gracious One!
 The holy, just, and good! the Eternal Love!

Unseen, unheard, unthought of wickedness!
 Why slumbered vengeance? No, it slumbered not.
 The ever just and righteous God would let 100
 His fury loose, and satisfy his threat.

That had been just, replied the reverend bard;
 But done, fair youth, thou ne'er hadst met me here,
 I ne'er had seen yon glorious throne in peace.

Thy powers are great, originally great,
 And purified even at the fount of light.
 Exert them now, call all their vigour out;
 Take room, think vastly, meditate intensely,
 Reason profoundly; send conjecture forth;
 Let fancy fly, stoop down, ascend; all length, 110
 All breadth explore, all moral, all divine;
 Ask prudence, justice, mercy ask, and might;
 Weigh good with evil, balance right with wrong;
 With virtue vice compare, hatred with love;
 God's holiness, God's justice, and God's truth,
 Deliberately and cautiously compare
 With sinful, wicked, vile, rebellious man;—
 And see if thou canst punish sin, and let
 Mankind go free. Thou failst; be not surprised;
 I bade thee search in vain. Eternal love,—
 Harp, lift thy voice on high!—eternal love, 120
 Eternal, sovereign love, and sovereign grace,
 Wisdom, and power, and mercy infinite,
 The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God,
 Devised the wondrous plan, devised, achieved,
 And in achieving made the marvel more.
 Attend, ye heavens! ye heaven of heavens, attend!
 Attend and wonder, wonder evermore!
 When man had fallen, rebelled, insulted God;
 Was most polluted, yet most madly proud; 130
 Indebted infinitely, yet most poor,
 Captive to sin, yet willing to be bound:
 To God's incensed justice and hot wrath
 Exposed, due victim of eternal death
 And utter wo—Harp, lift thy voice on high!

Ye everlasting hills ! ye angels ! bow ;
 Bow, ye redeemed of men !—God was made flesh,
 And dwelt with man on earth ! The Son of God,
 Only begotten and well beloved, between
 Men and his Father's justice interposed ; 140
 Put human nature on ; His wrath sustained ;
 And in their name suffered, obeyed, and died,
 Making his soul an offering for sin ;
 Just for unjust, and innocence for guilt,
 By doing, suffering, dying unconstrained,
 Save by omnipotence of boundless grace,
 Complete atonement made to God appeased
 Made honourable his insulted law,
 Turning the wrath aside from pardoned man.
 Thus Truth with Mercy met, and Righteousness, 150
 Stooping from highest heaven, embraced fair Peace,
 That walked the earth in fellowship with Love.

O love divine ! O mercy infinite !
 The audience here in glowing rapture broke ;
 O love, all height above, all depth below,
 Surpassing far all knowledge, all desire,
 All thought ! The Holy One for sinners dies !
 The Lord of life for guilty rebels bleeds,
 Quenches eternal fire with blood divine !
 Abundant mercy ! overflowing grace : 160
 There, whence I came, I something heard of men ;
 Their name had reached us, and report did speak
 Of some abominable horrid thing,
 Of desperate offence they had committed.
 And something too of wondrous grace we heard.
 And oft of our celestial visitants
 What man, what God had done, inquired ; but they,
 Forbid, our asking never met directly,
 Exhorting still to persevere upright, [170
 And we should hear in heaven, though greatly blest
 Ourselves, new wonders of God's wondrous love.
 This hinting, keener appetite to know
 Awaked ; and as we talked, and much admired
 What new we there should learn, we hasted each

To nourish virtue to perfection up,
 That we might have our wondering resolved,
 And leave of louder praise to greater deeds
 Of loving kindness due. Mysterious love!
 God was made flesh, and dwelt with men on earth!
 Blood holy, blood divine for sinners shed! 180
 My asking ends, but makes my wonder more.
 Saviour of men! henceforth be thou my theme;
 Redeeming love, my study day and night.
 Mankind were lost, all lost, and all redeemed!

Thou errst again, but innocently errst,
 Not knowing sin's depravity, nor man's
 Sincere and persevering wickedness.
 All were redeemed? Not all, or thou hadst heard
 No human voice in hell. Many refused,
 Although beseeched, refused to be redeemed, 190
 Redeemed from death to life, from wo to bliss!

Canst thou believe my song when thus I sing?
 When man had fallen, was ruined, hopeless, lost—
 Ye choral harps! ye angels that excel
 In strength! and loudest, ye redeemed of men!
 To God, to Him that sits upon the throne
 On high, and to the Lamb, sing honour, sing
 Dominion, glory, blessing sing, and praise!—
 When man had fallen, was ruined, hopeless, lost,
 Messiah, Prince of Peace, Eternal King, 200
 Died, that the dead might live, the lost be saved.
 Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, earth!
 Thou ancient, thou forgotten earth! ye worlds, admire!
 Admire and be confounded! and thou hell,
 Deepen thy eternal groan!—men would not be
 Redeemed,—I speak of many, not of all,—
 Would not be saved for lost, have life for death!

Mysterious song! the new-arrived exclaimed,
 Mysterious mercy! most mysterious hate!
 To disobey was mad, this madder far, 210
 Incurable insanity of will!

What now but wrath could guilty men expect?
 What more could love, what more could mercy do?

No more, resumed the bard, no more they could.
 Thou hast seen hell. The wicked there lament!
 And why? for love and mercy twice despised.
 The husbandman, who sluggishly forgot
 In spring to plough and sow, could censure none,
 Though winter clamoured round his empty barns.
 But he who, having thus neglected, did 220
 Refuse, when autumn came, and famine threatened,
 To reap the golden field that charity
 Bestowed; nay, more obdurate, proud, and blind,
 And stupid still, refused, though much beseeched,
 And long entreated, even with Mercy's tears,
 To eat what to his very lips was held,
 Cooked temptingly,—he certainly, at least,
 Deserved to die of hunger, unbemoaned.
 So did the wicked spurn the grace of God;
 And so were punished with the second death. 230
 The first, no doubt, punishment less severe
 Intended; death, belike, of all entire.
 But this incurred, by God discharged, and life
 Freely presented, and again despised,
 Despised, though bought with Mercy's proper blood—
 'Twas this dug hell, and kindled all its bounds
 With wrath and inextinguishable fire.

Free was the offer, free to all, of life
 And of salvation; but the proud of heart,
 Because 'twas free, would not accept; and still 240
 To merit wished; and choosing, thus unshipped,
 Uncompassed, unprovisioned, and bestormed,
 To swim a sea of breadth immeasurable,
 They scorned the goodly bark, whose wings the breath
 Of God's eternal Spirit filled for heaven,
 That stopped to take them in,—and so were lost!

What wonders dost thou tell! To merit, how!
 Of creature meriting in sight of God,

As right of service done, I never heard
Till now. We never fell; in virtue stood 250
Upright, and persevered in holiness;
But stood by grace, by grace we persevered.
Ourselves, our deeds, our holiest, highest deeds,
Unworthy aught; grace worthy endless praise.
If we fly swift, obedient to his will,
He gives us wings to fly; if we resist
Temptation, and ne'er fall, it is his shield
Omnipotent that wards it off; if we,
With love unquenchable, before him burn,
'Tis he that lights and keeps alive the flame. 260
Men surely lost their reason in their fall,
And did not understand the offer made.

They might have understood, the bard replied;
They had the Bible. Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? The author, God himself;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life
And death—eternal life, eternal death—
Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds—
Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!
Star of eternity! the only star 270
By which the bark of man could navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely! only star which rose on Time,
And, on its dark and troubled billows, still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God,
The eternal hills, pointed the sinner's eye.
By prophets, seers, and priests, and sacred bards,
Evangelists, apostles, men inspired, 280
And by the Holy Ghost anointed, set
Apart and consecrated to declare
To Earth the counsels of the Eternal One,
This book, this holiest, this sublimest book,
Was sent. Heaven's will, Heaven's code of laws entire,
To man, this book contained; defined the bounds
Of vice and virtue, and of life and death;

And what was shadow, what was substance taught.
 Much it revealed ; important all , the least [290
 Worth more than what else seemed of highest worth,
 But this of plainest, most essential truth :
 That God is one, eternal, holy, just,
 Omnipotent, omniscient, infinite ;
 Most wise, most good, most merciful and true ;
 In all perfection most unchangeable :
 That man, that every man of every clime
 And hue, of every age and every rank,
 Was bad, by nature and by practice bad ;
 In understanding blind, in will perverse,
 In heart corrupt ; in every thought, and word, 300
 In imagination, passion, and desire,
 Most utterly depraved throughout, and ill,
 In sight of Heaven, though less in sight of man ;
 At enmity with God his maker born,
 And by his very life an heir of death :
 That man, that every man was, farther, most
 Unable to redeem himself, or pay
 One mite of his vast debt to God ; nay, more,
 Was most reluctant and averse to be
 Redeemed, and sin's most voluntary slave : 310
 That Jesus, Son of God, of Mary born
 In Bethlehem, and by Pilate crucified
 On Calvary, for man, thus fallen and lost,
 Died ; and, by death, life and salvation bought,
 And perfect righteousness, for all who should
 In his great name believe : That He, the third
 In the eternal Essence, to the prayer
 Sincere should come, should come as soon as asked,
 Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
 To give faith and repentance, such as God 320
 Accepts ; to open the intellectual eyes,
 Blinded by sin ; to bend the stubborn will,
 Perversely to the side of wrong inclined,
 To God and his commandments, just and good ;
 The wild, rebellious passions to subdue,
 And bring them back to harmony with heaven ;
 To purify the conscience, and to lead

The mind into all truth, and to adorn
With every holy ornament of grace,
And sanctify the whole renewed soul, 330
Which henceforth might no more fall totally,
But persevere, though erring oft, amidst
The mists of Time, in piety to God,
And sacred works of charity to men :
That he who thus believed, and practised thus,
Should have his sins forgiven, however vile ,
Should be sustained at mid-day, morn, and even,
By God's omnipotent, eternal grace ;
And in the evil hour of sore disease,
Temptation, persecution, war, and death,— 340
For temporal death, although unstinged, remained,—
Beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings
Should sit unhurt, and at the judgment-day,
Should share the resurrection of the just,
And reign with Christ in bliss for evermore :
That all, however named, however great,
Who would not thus believe, nor practise thus,
But in their sins impenitent remained,
Should in perpetual fear and terror live ;
Should die unpardoned, unredeemed, unsaved ; 350
And, at the hour of doom, should be cast out
To utter darkness in the night of hell,
By mercy and by God abandoned, there
To reap the harvests of eternal wo.

This did that book declare in obvious phrase,
In most sincere and honest words, by God
Himself selected and arranged, so clear,
So plain, so perfectly distinct, that none,
Who read with humble wish to understand,
And asked the Spirit, given to all who asked, 360
Could miss their meaning, blazed in heavenly light.

This book, this holy book, on every line
Marked with the seal of high divinity,
On every leaf bedewed with drops of love
Divine, and with the eternal heraldry

And signature of God Almighty stamped
 From first to last, this ray of sacred light,
 This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
 Mercy took down, and, in the night of Time
 Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow ; 370
 And evermore beseeching men, with tears
 And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.
 And many to her voice gave ear, and read,
 Believed, obeyed ; and now, as the Amen,
 True, Faithful Witness swore, with snowy robes
 And branchy palms, surround the fount of life,
 And drink the streams of immortality,
 For ever happy, and for ever young.

Many believed ; but more the truth of God
 Turned to a lie, deceiving and deceived ; 380
 Each with the accursed sorcery of sin,
 To his own wish and vile propensity
 Transforming still the meaning of the text.

Hear, while I briefly tell what mortals proved,
 By effort vast of ingenuity,
 Most wondrous, though perverse and damnable,
 Proved from the Bible, which, as thou hast heard,
 So plainly spoke that all could understand.
 First, and not least in number, argued some,
 From out this book itself, it was a lie, 390
 A fable, framed by crafty men, to cheat
 The simple herd, and make them bow the knee
 To kings and priests. These, in their wisdom, left
 The light revealed, and turned to fancies wild ;
 Maintaining loud, that ruined, helpless man,
 Needed no Saviour. Others proved that men
 Might live and die in sin, and yet be saved,
 For so it was decreed ; binding the will,
 By God left free, to unconditional,
 Unreasonable fate. Others believed 400
 That he who was most criminal, debased,
 Condemned, and dead, unaided might ascend
 The heights of virtue ; to a perfect law

Giving a lame, half-way obedience, which
By useless effort only served to show
The impotence of him who vainly strove
With finite arm to measure infinite ;
Most useless effort, when to justify
In sight of God it meant, as proof of faith
Most acceptable and worthy of all praise. 410
Another held, and from the Bible held,
He was infallible, most fallen by such
Pretence ; that none the Scriptures, open to all,
And most to humble-hearted, ought to read,
But priests ; that all who ventured to disclaim
His forged authority, incurred the wrath
Of Heaven ; and he who, in the blood of such,
Though father, mother, daughter, wife, or son,
Inbrued his hands, did most religious work,
Well pleasing to the heart of the Most High. 420
Others in outward rite devotion placed,
In meats, in drinks, in robe of certain shape,
In bodily abasements, bended knees ;
Days, numbers, places, vestments, words, and names ;
Absurdly in their hearts imagining,
That God, like men, was pleased with outward show.
Another, stranger and more wicked still,
With dark and dolorous labor, ill applied,
With many a gripe of conscience, and with most
Unhealthy and abortive reasoning, 430
That brought his sanity to serious doubt,
'Mong wise and honest men, maintained that He,
First Wisdom, Great Messiah, Prince of Peace,
The second of the uncreated Three,
Was naught but man, of earthly origin :
Thus making void the sacrifice divine,
And leaving guilty men, God's holy law
Still unatoned, to work them endless death.

These are a part ; but to relate thee all
The monstrous, unbaptized fantasies, 440
Imaginations fearfully absurd,
Hobgoblin rites, and moon-struck reveries,

Distracted creeds, and visionary dreams,
 More bodiless and hideously misshapen
 Than ever fancy, at the noon of night,
 Playing at will, framed in the madman's brain,
 That from this book of simple truth were proved,
 Were proved, as foolish men were wont to prove,
 Would bring my word in doubt, and thy belief
 Stagger, though here I sit and sing, within 450
 The pale of truth, where falsehood never came.

The rest, who lost the heavenly light revealed,
 Not wishing to retain God in their minds,
 In darkness wandered on. Yet could they not,
 Though moral night around them drew her pall
 Of blackness, rest in utter unbelief.
 The voice within, the voice of God, that naught
 Could bribe to sleep, though steeped in sorceries
 Of hell, and much abused by whisperings 460
 Of evil spirits in the dark, announced
 A day of judgment and a Judge, a day
 Of misery or bliss : and, being ill
 At ease, for gods they chose them stocks and stones,
 Reptiles, and weeds, and beasts, and creeping things,
 And spirits accursed, ten thousand deities !
 Imagined worse than he who craved their peace :
 And, bowing, worshipped these, as best beseemed,
 With midnight revelry obscene and loud,
 With dark, infernal, devilish ceremonies,
 And horrid sacrifice of human flesh, 470
 That made the fair heavens blush. So bad was sin ;
 So lost, so ruined, so depraved was man,
 Created first in God's own image fair.

Oh, cursed, cursed Sin ! traitor to God,
 And ruiner of man ! mother of Wo,
 And Death, and Hell ! wretched, yet seeking worse ;
 Polluted most, yet wallowing in the mire ;
 Most mad, yet drinking Frenzy's giddy cup ;
 Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still ;
 Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence ; 480

Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair ;
 Destroyed, destroying ; in tormenting, pained ;
 Unawed by wrath, by mercy unreclaimed ;
 Thing most unsightly, most forlorn, most sad,
 Thy time on earth is passed, thy war with God
 And holiness. But who, oh, who shall tell,
 Thy unrepentable and ruinous thoughts !
 Thy sighs, thy groans ! who reckon thy burning tears,
 And damned looks of everlasting grief, [490
 Where now, with those who took their part with thee.
 Thou sittst in hell, gnawed by the eternal Worm,
 To hurt no more, on all the holy hills !

That those, deserting once the lamp of truth,
 Should wander ever on, from worse to worse
 Erroneously, thy wonder needs not ask :
 But that enlightened, reasonable men,
 Knowing themselves accountable, to whom
 God spoke from heaven, and by his servants warned,
 Both day and night, with earnest, pleading voice,
 Of retribution equal to their works, 500
 Should persevere in evil, and be lost,—
 This strangeness, this unpardonable guilt,
 Demands an answer, which my song unfolds,
 In part, directly ; but, hereafter, more,
 To satisfy thy wonder, thou shalt learn,
 Inferring much from what is yet to sing.

Know, then, of men who sat in highest place,
 Exalted, and for sin by others done
 Were chargeable, the king and priests were chief.
 Many were faithful, holy, just, upright, 510
 Faithful to God and man, reigning renowned
 In righteousness, and, to the people, loud
 And fearless, speaking all the words of life.
 These, at the judgment-day, as thou shalt hear,
 Abundant harvest reaped. But many, too,
 Alas, how many ! famous now in hell,
 Were wicked, cruel, tyrannous, and vile ;
 Ambitious of themselves, abandoned, mad ;

And still from servants hasting to be gods,
 Such gods as now they serve in Erebus. 520
 I pass their lewd example by, that led
 So many wrong, for courtly fashion lost,
 And prove them guilty of one crime alone.
 Of every wicked ruler, prince supreme,
 Or magistrate below, the one intent,
 Purpose, desire, and struggle, day and night,
 Was evermore to wrest the crown from off
 Messiah's head, and put it on his own ;
 And in His place give spiritual laws to men ;
 To oind religion, free by birth, by God 530
 And nature free, and made accountable
 To none but God, behind the wheels of state ;
 To make the holy altar, where the Prince
 Of life, incarnate, bled to ransom man,
 A footstool to the throne. For this they met,
 Assembled, counselled, meditated, planned ;
 Devised in open and secret ; and for this
 Enacted creeds of wondrous texture, creeds
 The Bible never owned, unsanctioned too, 540
 And reprobate in heaven ; but, by the power
 That made,—exerted now in gentler form,
 Monopolizing rights and privileges,
 Equal to all, and waving now the sword
 Of persecution fierce, tempered in hell,—
 Forced on the conscience of inferior men :
 The conscience, that sole monarchy in man,
 Owing allegiance to no earthly prince ;
 Made by the edict of creation free ;
 Made sacred, made above all human laws ;
 Holding of heaven alone ; of most divine 550
 And indefeasible authority ;
 An individual sovereignty, that none
 Created might, unpunished, bind or touch ,
 Unbound, save by the eternal laws of God,
 And unamenable to all below.

Thus did the uncircumcised potentates
 Of earth debase religion in the sight

Of those they ruled, who, looking up, beheld
The fair celestial gift despised, enslaved ;
And, mimicking the folly of the great, 560
With prompt docility despised her too.

The prince or magistrate, however named
Or praised, who, knowing better, acted thus,
Was wicked, and received, as he deserved,
Damnation. But the unfaithful priest, what tongue
Enough shall execrate? His doctrine may
Be passed, though mixed with most unhallowed leaven,
That proved, to those who foolishly partook,
Eternal bitterness. But this was still
His sin, beneath what cloak soever veiled, 570
His ever growing and perpetual sin,
First, last, and middle thought, whence every wish,
Whence every action rose, and ended both :
To mount to place, and power of worldly sort ;
To ape the gaudy pomp and equipage
Of earthly state, and on his mitred brow
To place a royal crown. For this he sold
The sacred truth to him who most would give
Of titles, benefices, honours, names ;
For this betrayed his Master ; and for this 580
Made merchandise of the immortal souls
Committed to his care. This was his sin.

Of all who office held unfairly, none
Could plead excuse ; he least and last of all.
By solemn, awful ceremony, he
Was set apart to speak the truth entire,
By action and by word ; and round him stood
The people, from his lips expecting knowledge.
One day in seven, the Holy Sabbath termed,
They stood ; for he had sworn, in face of God 590
And man, to deal sincerely with their souls ;
To preach the gospel for the gospel's sake ;
Had sworn to hate and put away all pride,
All vanity, all love of earthly pomp ;
To seek all mercy, meekness, truth, and grace ;

And being so endowed himself, and taught,
 In them like works of holiness to move;
 Dividing faithfully the word of life.
 And oft indeed the word of life he taught;
 But practising as thou hast heard, who could 600
 Believe? Thus was Religion wounded sore
 At her own altars, and among her friends.
 The people went away, and, like the priest,
 Fulfilling what the prophet spoke before,
 For honour strove, and wealth, and place, as if
 The preacher had rehearsed an idle tale.
 The enemies of God rejoiced, and loud
 The unbeliever laughed, boasting a life
 Of fairer character than his who owned,
 For king and guide, the undefiled One 610

Most guilty, villanous, dishonest man!
 Wolf in the clothing of the gentle lamb!
 Dark traitor in Messiah's holy camp!
 Leper in saintly garb! assassin masked
 In Virtue's robe! vile hypocrite accursed!
 I strive in vain to set his evil forth!
 The words that should sufficiently accurse
 And execrate such reprobate, had need
 Come glowing from the lips of eldest hell.
 Among the saddest in the den of wo, 620
 Thou sawst him saddest, 'mong the damned most
 damned.

But why should I with indignation burn,
 Not well beseeing here, and long forgot?
 Or why one censure for another's sin?
 Each had his conscience, each his reason, will,
 And understanding, for himself to search,
 To choose, reject, believe, consider, act.
 And God proclaimed from heaven, and by an oath
 Confirmed, that each should answer for himself.
 And as his own peculiar work should be, 630
 Done by his proper self, should live or die.

But sin, deceitful and deceiving still,
Had gained the heart, and reason led astray.

A strange belief, that leaned its idiot back
On folly's topmost twig,—belief that God,
Most wise, had made a world, had creatures made,
Beneath his care to govern and protect,—
Devoured its thousands. Reason, not the true,
Learned, deep, sober, comprehensive, sound;
But bigoted, one-eyed, short-sighted Reason, 640
Most zealous, and sometimes, no doubt, sincere,
Devoured its thousands. Vanity to be
Renowned for creed eccentric, devoured
Its thousands; but a lazy, corpulent,
And over-credulous faith, that leaned on all
It met, nor asked if 'twas a reed or oak;
Stepped on, but never earnestly inquired
Whether to heaven or hell the journey led,
Devoured its tens of thousands, and its hands
Made reddest in the precious blood of souls. 650

In Time's pursuits men ran till out of breath.
The astronomer soared up, and counted stars,
And gazed, and gazed upon the heaven's bright face,
Till he dropped down dim-eyed into the grave.
The numerist, in calculations deep,
Grew gray. The merchant at his desk expired.
The statesman hunted for another place,
Till death o'ertook him, and made him his prey.
The miser spent his eldest energy
In grasping for another mite. The scribe 660
Rubbed pensively his old and withered brow,
Devising new impediments to hold
In doubt the suit that threatened to end too soon.
The priest collected tithes, and pleaded rights
Of decimation to the very last.
In science, learning, all philosophy,
Men laboured all their days, and laboured hard,
And, dying, sighed how little they had done.

But in religion, they at once grew wise.
 A creed in print, though never understood ; 670
 A theologic system on the shelf,
 Was spiritual lore enough, and served their turn,
 But served it ill. They sinned, and never knew.
 For what the Bible said of good and bad,
 Of holiness and sin, they never asked.

Absurd, prodigiously absurd, to think
 That man's minute and feeble faculties,
 Even in the very childhood of his being,
 With mortal shadows dimmed and wrapped around,
 Could comprehend at once the mighty scheme, 680
 Where rolled the ocean of eternal love ;
 Where wisdom infinite its master-stroke
 Displayed ; and where omnipotence, oppressed,
 Did travail in the greatness of its strength ;
 And everlasting Justice lifted up
 The sword to smite the guiltless Son of God ;
 And Mercy smiling bade the sinner go !
 Redemption is the science and the song
 Of all eternity. Archangels, day
 And night, into its glories look. The saints, 690
 The elders round the Throne, old in the years
 Of heaven, examine it perpetually ;
 And, every hour, get clearer, ampler views
 Of right and wrong ; see virtue's beauty more ;
 See vice more utterly depraved and vile ;
 And this, with a more perfect hatred, hate ;
 That daily love with a more perfect love.

But whether I for man's perdition blame
 Office administered amiss, pursuit
 Of pleasure false, perverted reason blind, 700
 Or indolence that ne'er inquired ; I blame
 Effect and consequence, the branch, the leaf.
 Who finds the fount and bitter root, the first
 And guiltiest cause whence sprung this endless wo,
 Must deep descend into the human heart,
 And find it there. Dread passion ! making men
 On earth, and even in hell, if Mercy yet

Would stoop so low, unwilling to be saved,
 If saved by grace of God. Hear, then, in brief,
 What peopled hell, what holds its prisoners there. 710

Pride, self-adoring pride, was primal cause
 Of all sin passed, all pain, all wo to come.
 Unconquerable pride ! first, eldest sin,
 Great fountain-head of evil ! highest source,
 Whence flowed rebellion 'gainst the Omnipotent,
 Whence hate of man to man, and all else ill.
 Pride at the bottom of the human heart
 Lay, and gave root and nourishment to all
 That grew above. Great ancestor of vice !
 Hate, unbelief, and blasphemy of God ; 720
 Envy and slander, malice and revenge ;
 And murder, and deceit, and every birth
 Of damned sort, was progeny of pride.
 It was the ever-moving, acting force,
 The constant aim, and the most thirsty wish
 Of every sinner unrenewed, to be
 A god ; in purple or in rags, to have
 Himself adored. Whatever shape or form
 His actions took, whatever phrase he threw
 About his thoughts, or mantle o'er his life, 730
 To be the highest, was the inward cause
 Of all ; the purpose of the heart to be
 Set up, admired, obeyed. But who would bow
 The knee to one who served and was dependent
 Hence man's perpetual struggle, night and day,
 To prove he was his own proprietor,
 And independent of his God ; that what
 He had might be esteemed his own, and praised
 As such. He laboured still, and tried to stand
 Alone, unpropped, to be obliged to none ; 740
 And in the madness of his pride, he bade
 His God farewell, and turned away to be
 A god himself ; resolving to rely,
 Whatever came, upon his own right hand.

O desperate frenzy ! madness of the will !
 And drunkenness of the heart ! that naught could quench

But floods of wo, poured from the sea of wrath,
 Behind which mercy set. To think to turn
 The back on life original, and live!
 The creature to set up a rival throne 750
 In the Creator's realm! to deify
 A worm! and in the sight of God be proud!
 To lift an arm of flesh against the shafts
 Of the Omnipotent, and, midst his wrath,
 To seek for happiness!—insanity
 Most mad! guilt most complete! Seest thou those
 worlds

That roll at various distance round the throne
 Of God, innumerable, and fill the calm
 Of heaven with sweetest harmony, when saints
 And angels sleep? As one of these, from love 760
 Centripetal withdrawing, and from light,
 And heat, and nourishment cut off, should rush
 Abandoned o'er the line that runs between
 Create and increate, from ruin driven
 To ruin still, through the abortive waste;
 So pride from God drew off the bad; and so,
 Forsaken of him, he lets them ever try
 Their single arm against the second death;
 Amidst vindictive thunders lets them try
 The stoutness of their hearts, and lets them try 770
 To quench their thirst amidst the unfading fire;
 And to reap joy where he has sown despair;
 To walk alone, unguided, unbemoaned,
 Where Evil dwells, and Death, and moral Night;
 In utter emptiness to find enough;
 In utter dark find light; and find repose,
 Where God with tempest plagues for evermore.
 For so they wished it, so did pride desire.

Such was the cause that turned so many off
 Rebelliously from God, and led them on 780
 From vain to vainer still, in endless chace.
 And such the cause that made so many cheeks
 Pale, and so many knees to shake, when men
 Rose from the grave; as thou shalt hear anon.

COURSE OF TIME.

Book 英英英.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK III.

The Bard proceeds to a more full description of the "ways of Time," "the fond pursuits and vanities of men." Desire of happiness was universal in every age; but the star of God shining upon the only path to it was not heeded. The Bible taught that happiness was indissolubly connected with virtue; that it was a fruit to be gathered only from the tree of holiness, uprooted by the apostasy, but planted again by the Son of God, and nourished by the dewy influences of the Spirit. But, disregarding this, men pursued happiness in ten thousand mistaken routes, grasping at lying shades until the grave received them. Many "sweat and bled for *Gold*;" most for the luxuries it bought, but some with the miser's craving avarice. Blinded votaries also chased the Shadow *Pleasure*; who, with her thousand changing forms and varying robes, allured to her thousand fatal haunts; to the hall of giddy dance, the scene of thoughtless revel, the harlot's treacherous bed. Another Phantom fleeing in the mist of Time was *Earthly Fame*, whose voice of empty breath oft deceived the man of science, and the poet, the reverend divine, the simple artisan, the vain fair one, the haughty warrior, the proud usurper. Even the Drunkard's bowl and the Sceptic's helmless bark were tried in the wild pursuit of happiness. This was done, too, notwithstanding the warning voice of wisdom speaking to man loudly in the Seasons, the Day, the Night, the Grave, the Word of God; notwithstanding all the pangs of Remorse, and all the sorrows of Disappointment. Against these, reckless men closed their ears and their hearts, until Death revealed to each his folly, and too late convinced him of the grand lesson of the Bible, "Eternity is all."

In the description of Disappointment the Author is happily introduced, and mention made of interesting circumstances in his history.

THE
COURSE OF TIME

Book XXX.

BEHOLDST thou yonder, on the crystal sea,
Beneath the throne of God, an image fair,
And in its hand a mirror large and bright?
'Tis truth, immutable, eternal truth,
In figure emblematical expressed.
Before it Virtue stands, and smiling sees,
Well pleased, in her reflected soul, no spot.
The sons of heaven, archangel, seraph, saint,
There daily read their own essential worth;
And, as they read, take place among the just 10
Or high, or low, each as his value seems.
There each his certain interest learns, his true
Capacity; and, going thence, pursues,
Unerringly, through all the tracts of thought,
As God ordains, best ends by wisest means.

The Bible held this mirror's place on earth.
But, few would read, or, reading, saw themselves.
The chase was after shadows, phantoms strange,
That in the twilight walked of Time, and mocked
The eager hunt, escaping evermore; 20
Yet with so many promises and looks
Of gentle sort, that he whose arms returned.

Empty a thousand times, still stretched them out,
And, grasping, brought them back again unfilled.

In rapid outline thou hast heard of man,
His death, his offered life, that life by most
Despised, the Star of God, the Bible, scorned,
That else to happiness and heaven had led,
And saved my lyre from narrative of wo.
Hear now more largely of the ways of Time, 30
The fond pursuits and vanities of men.

“ Love God, love truth, love virtue, and be happy ,
These were the words first uttered in the ear
Of every being rational made, and made
For thought, or word, or deed accountable.
Most men the first forgot, the second none.
Whatever path they took, by hill or vale,
By night or day, the universal wish,
The aim, and sole intent, was happiness.
But, erring from the heaven-appointed path, 40
Strange tracks indeed they took through barren wastes,
And up the sandy mountain climbing toiled,
Which pining lay beneath the curse of God,
And naught produced. Yet did the traveller look
And point his eye before him greedily,
As if he saw some verdant spot, where grew
The heavenly flower, where sprung the well of life,
Where undisturbed felicity reposed ;
Though Wisdom’s eye no vestige could discern,
That Happiness had ever passed that way. 50

Wisdom was right, for still the terms remained
Unchanged, unchangeable, the terms on which
True peace was given to man, unchanged as God,
Who, in his own essential nature, binds
Eternally to virtue happiness,
Nor lets them part through all his universe

Philosophy, as thou shalt hear, when she
Shall have her praise, her praise and censure too,

Did much, refining and exalting man ;
 But could not nurse a single plant that bore 60
 True happiness. From age to age she toiled,
 Shed from her eyes the mist that dimmed them still,
 Looked forth on man, explored the wild and tame,
 The savage and polite, the sea and land,
 And starry heavens ; and then retired far back
 To meditation's silent, shady seat ;
 And there sat pale, and thoughtfully, and weighed
 With wary, most exact, and scrupulous care,
 Man's nature, passions, hopes, propensities,
 Relations, and pursuits, in reason's scale ; 70
 And searched and weighed, and weighed and searched
 again,
 And many a fair and goodly volume wrote,
 That seemed well worded too, wherein were found
 Uncountable receipts, pretending each,
 If carefully attended to, to cure
 Mankind of folly, to root out the briers,
 And thorns, and weeds, that choked the growth of
 joy ;
 And showing too, in plain and decent phrase,
 Which sounded much like Wisdom's, how to plant,
 To shelter, water, culture, prune, and rear 80
 The tree of happiness ; and oft their plans
 Were tried ; but still the fruit was green and sour.

Of all the trees that in Earth's vineyard grew,
 And with their clusters tempted man to pull
 And eat, one tree, one tree alone, the true
 Celestial manna bore, which filled the soul,
 The tree of holiness, of heavenly seed,
 A native of the skies ; though stunted much
 And dwarfed, by Time's cold, damp, ungenial soil,
 And chilling winds, yet yielding fruit so pure, 90
 So nourishing and sweet, as, on his way,
 Refreshed the pilgrim ; and begot desire
 Unquenchable to climb the arduous path
 To where her sister plants, in their own clime,
 Around the fount, and by the stream of life,

Blooming beneath the Sun that never sets,
Bear fruit of perfect relish fully ripe.

To plant this tree, uprooted by the fall,
To earth the Son of God descended, shed
His precious blood ; and on it evermore, 100
From off his living wings, the Spirit shook
The dews of heaven, to nurse and hasten its growth.
Nor was this care, this infinite expense,
Not needed to secure the holy plant.
To root it out, and wither it from earth,
Hell strove with all its strength, and blew with all
Its blasts ! and Sin, with cold, consumptive breath,
Involved it still in clouds of mortal damp.
Yet did it grow, thus kept, protected thus ;
And bear the only fruit of true delight ; 110
The only fruit worth plucking under heaven.

But few, alas ! the holy plant could see,
For heavy mists that Sin around it threw
Perpetually ; and few the sacrifice
Would make, by which alone its clusters stooped,
And came within the reach of mortal man.
For this, of him who would approach and eat,
Was rigorously exacted to the full :
To tread and bruise beneath the foot the world
Entire ; its prides, ambitions, hopes, desires ; 120
Its gold and all its brodered equipage ;
To loose its loves and friendships from the heart,
And cast them off ; to shut the ear against
Its praise, and all its flatteries abhor ;
And, having thus behind him thrown what seemed
So good and fair, then must he lowly kneel,
And with sincerity, in which the Eye
That slumbers not, nor sleeps, could see no lack,
This prayer pray : " Lord, God ! thy will be done,
Thy holy will, howe'er it cross my own." 130
Hard labour this for flesh and blood ! too hard
For most it seemed. So, turning, they the tree
Derided as mere bramble that could bear

No fruit of special taste ; and so set out
 Upon ten thousand different routes to seek
 What they had left behind, to seek what they
 Had lost. For still as something once possessed
 And lost, true happiness appeared. All thought
 They once were happy ; and even while they smoked
 And panted in the chase, believed themselves 140
 More miserable to-day than yesterday,
 To-morrow than to-day. When youth complained,
 The ancient sinner shook his hoary head,
 As if he meant to say, Stop till you come
 My length, and then you may have cause to sigh.
 At twenty, cried the boy, who now had seen
 Some blemish in his joys, How happily
 Plays yonder child that busks the mimic babe,
 And gathers gentle flowers, and never sighs !
 At forty, in the fervor of pursuit, 150
 Far on in disappointment's dreary vale,
 The grave and sage-like man looked back upon
 The stripling youth of plump unseared hope,
 Who galloped gay and briskly up behind,
 And, moaning, wished himself eighteen again.
 And he of threescore years and ten, in whose
 Chilled eye, fatigued with gaping after hope,
 Earth's freshest verdure seemed but blasted leaves,
 Praised childhood, youth, and manhood ; and denounced
 Old age alone as barren of all joy. 160
 Decisive proof that men had left behind
 The happiness they sought, and taken a most
 Erroneous path ; since every step they took
 Was deeper mire. Yet did they onward run,
 Pursuing Hope that danced before them still,
 And beckoned them to proceed ; and with their hands,
 That shook and trembled piteously with age,
 Grasped at the lying Shade, even till the earth
 Beneath them broke, and wrapped them in the grave.

Sometimes indeed, when Wisdom in their ear 170
 Whispered, and with its disenchanting wand,
 Effectually touched the sorcery of their eyes,

Directly pointing to the holy tree,
Where grew the food they sought, they turned, surprised,
That they had missed so long what now they found
As one upon whose mind some new and rare
Idea glances, and retires as quick,
Ere memory has time to write it down ;
Stung with the loss, into a thoughtful cast
He throws his face, and rubs his vexed brow , 180
Searches each nook and corner of his soul
With frequent care ; reflects, and re-reflects,
And tries to touch relations that may start
The fugitive again ; and oft is foiled ;
Till something like a seeming chance, or flight
Of random fancy, when expected least,
Calls back the wandered thought, long sought in vain ;
Then does uncommon joy fill all his mind ;
And still he wonders, as he holds it fast,
What lay so near he could not sooner find : 190
So did the man rejoice, when from his eye
The film of folly fell, and what he, day
And night, and far and near, had idly searched,
Sprung up before him suddenly displayed ;
So wondered why he missed the tree so long.

But, few returned from Folly's giddy chase,
Few heard the voice of Wisdom, or obeyed.
Keen was the search, and various and wide,
Without, within, along the flowery vale,
And up the rugged cliff, and on the top 200
Of mountains high, and on the ocean wave.
Keen was the search, and various, and wide,
And ever and anon a shout was heard :
" Ho ! here's the tree of life ! come, eat, and live !"
And round the new discoverer quick they flocked
In multitudes, and plucked, and with great haste
Devoured ; and sometimes in the lips 't was sweet,
And promised well ; but in the belly gall.
Yet after him that cried again, " Ho ! here's
The tree of life !" again they ran, and pulled, 210
And chewed again, and found it bitter still.

From disappointment on to disappointment,
Year after year, age after age, pursued,
The child, the youth, the hoary-headed man,
Alike pursued, and ne'er grew wise. For it
Was folly's most peculiar attribute,
And native act, to make experience void.

But hastily, as pleasures tasted, turned
To loathing and disgust, they needed not
Even such experiment to prove them vain. 220
In hope or in possession, Fear, alike,
Boding disaster, stood. Over the flower
Of fairest sort, that bloomed beneath the sun,
Protected most, and sheltered from the storm,
The Spectre, like a dark and thunderous cloud,
Hung dismally, and threatened, before the hand
Of him that wished could pull it, to descend,
And o'er the desert drive its withered leaves ;
Or, being pulled, to blast it unenjoyed,
While yet he gazed upon its loveliness 230
And just began to drink its fragrance up.

Gold many hunted, sweat and bled for gold ;
Waked all the night, and laboured all the day.
And what was this allurements, dost thou ask ?
A dust dug from the bowels of the earth,
Which, being cast into the fire, came out
A shining thing that fools admired, and called
A god ; and in devout and humble plight
Before it kneeled, the greater to the less ;
And on its altar sacrificed ease, peace, 240
Truth, faith, integrity ; good conscience, friends,
Love, charity, benevolence, and all
The sweet and tender sympathies of life ;
And, to complete the horrid murderous rite,
And signalize their folly, offered up
Their souls and an eternity of bliss,
To gain them—what?—an hour of dreaming joy,
A feverish hour, that hastened to be done,
And ended in the bitterness of wo.

Most, for the luxuries it bought, the pomp, 250
 The praise, the glitter, fashion, and renown,
 This yellow phantom followed and adored.
 But there was one in folly farther gone,
 With eye awry, incurable, and wild,
 The laughing-stock of devils and of men,
 And by his guardian angel quite given up,—
 The miser, who with dust inanimate
 Held wedded intercourse. Ill guided wretch !
 Thou mightst have seen him at the midnight hour,
 When good men slept, and in light winged dreams 260
 Ascended up to God,—in wasteful hall,
 With vigilance and fasting worn to skin
 And bone, and wrapped in most debasing rags,—
 Thou mightst have seen him bending o'er his heaps,
 And holding strange communion with his gold ;
 And, as his thievish fancy seemed to hear
 The night-man's foot approach, starting alarmed,
 And in his old, decrepit, withered hand,
 That palsy shook, grasping the yellow earth
 To make it sure. Of all God made upright, 270
 And in their nostrils breathed a living soul,
 Most fallen, most prone, most earthy, most debased ;
 Of all that sold Eternity for Time,
 None bargained on so easy terms with Death.
 Illustrious fool ! nay, most inhuman wretch !
 He sat among his bags, and, with a look
 Which hell might be ashamed of, drove the poor
 Away unalmsed, and midst abundance died,
 Sorest of evils ! died of utter want.

Before this Shadow, in the vales of earth, 280
 Fools saw another glide, which seemed of more
 Intrinsic worth. Pleasure her name ; good name,
 Though ill applied. A thousand forms she took,
 A thousand garbs she wore, in every age
 And clime, changing, as in her votaries changed
 Desire ; but, inwardly, the same in all.
 Her most essential lineaments we trace,
 Her general features everywhere alike.

Of comely form she was, and fair of face ;
 And underneath her eyelids sat a kind 290
 Of witching sorcery that nearer drew
 Whoever, with unguarded look, beheld ;
 A dress of gaudy hue loosely attired
 Her loveliness ; her air and manner frank,
 And seeming free of all disguise ; her song
 Enchanting ; and her words, which sweetly dropped,
 As honey from the comb, mos' large of promise,
 Still prophesying days of new delight,
 And rapturous nights of undecaying joy ;
 And in her hand, where'er she went, she held 300
 A radiant cup that seemed of nectar full ;
 And by her side, danced fair, delusive Hope.
 The fool pursued, enamoured ; and the wise,
 Experienced man, who reasoned much and thought,
 Was sometimes seen laying his wisdom down,
 And vying with the stripling in the chase.

Nor wonder thou, for she was really fair,
 Decked to the very taste of flesh and blood,
 And many thought her sound within, and gay
 And healthy at the heart : but thought amiss. 310
 For she was full of all disease : her bones
 Were rotten ; Consumption licked her blood, and drank
 Her marrow up ; her breath smelled mortally ;
 And in her bowels plague and fever lurked ;
 And in her very heart, and reins, and life,
 Corruption's worm gnawed greedily unseen.

Many her haunts. Thou mightst have seen her now
 With Indolence, lolling on the mid-day couch,
 And whispering drowsy words ; and now at dawn,
 Loudly and rough, joining the sylvan horn ; 320
 Or sauntering in the park, and to the tale
 Of slander giving ear ; or sitting fierce,
 Rude, blasphemous, malicious, raving, mad,
 Where fortune to the fickle die was bound.

But chief she loved the scene of deep debauch,
 Where revelry, and dance, and frantic song,

Disturbed the sleep of honest men ; and where
 The drunkard sat she entered in, well pleased,
 With eye brimful of wanton mirthfulness,
 And urged him still to fill another cup.

330

And at the shadowy twilight, in the dark
 And gloomy night, I looked, and saw her come
 Abroad, arrayed in harlot's soft attire ;
 And walk without in every street, and lie
 In wait at every corner, full of guile :
 And as the unwary youth of simple heart,
 And void of understanding, passed, she caught
 And kissed him, and with lips of lying said,
 I have peace-offerings with me ; I have paid
 My vows this day ; and therefore came I forth 340
 To meet thee, and to seek thee diligently,
 To seek thy face, and I have found thee here.
 My bed is decked with robes of tapestry,
 With carved work and sheets of linen fine ;
 Perfumed with aloes, myrrh, and cinnamon.
 Sweet are stolen waters ! pleasant is the bread
 In secret eaten ! the goodman is from home.
 Come, let us take our fill of love till morn
 Awake ; let us delight ourselves with loves.
 With much fair speech, she caused the youth to
 yield ; 350
 And forced him with the flattering of her tongue.
 I looked, and saw him follow to her house,
 As goes the ox to slaughter ; as the fool
 To the correction of the stocks ; or bird
 That hastes into the subtle fowler's snare,
 And knows not, simple thing, 'tis for its life.
 I saw him enter in, and heard the door
 Behind them shut ; and in the dark, still night,
 When God's unsleeping eye alone can see,
 He went to her adulterous bed. At morn 360
 I looked, and saw him not among the youths.
 I heard his father mourn, his mother weep,
 For none returned that went with her. The dead
 Were in her house, her guests in depths of hell.

She wove the winding-sheet of souls, and laid
Them in the urn of everlasting death.

Such was the Shadow fools pursued on earth,
Under the name of Pleasure; fair outside,
Within corrupted, and corrupting still.
Ruined and ruinous, her sure reward. 370
Her total recompense, was still, as he,
The bard, recorder of Earth's Seasons, sung,
"Vexation, disappointment, and remorse."
Yet at her door the young and old, and some
Who held high character among the wise,
Together stood, and strove among themselves,
Who first should enter, and be ruined first.

Strange competition of immortal souls!
To sweat for death! to strive for misery!
But think not Pleasure told her end was death. 380
Even human folly then had paused at least,
And given some signs of hesitation; nor
Arrived so hot, and out of breath, at wo.
Though contradicted every day by facts
That sophistry itself would stumble o'er,
And to the very teeth a liar proved,
Ten thousand times, as if unconscious still
Of inward blame, she stood and waved her hand,
And pointed to her bower, and said to all
Who passed, Take yonder flowery path, my steps 390
Attend; I lead the smoothest way to heaven;
This world receive as surety for the next:
And many simple men, most simple, though
Renowned for learning much, and wary skill,
Believed, and turned aside, and were undone.

Another leaf of finished Time we turn,
And read of fame, terrestrial fame, which died,
And rose not at the resurrection morn;
Not that by virtue earned, the true renown,
Begun on earth, and lasting in the skies, 400
Worthy the lofty wish of seraphim,—

The approbation of the Eye that sees
 The end from the beginning, sees from cause
 To most remote effect. Of it we read
 In book of God's remembrance, in the book
 Of life, from which the quick and dead were judged;
 The book that lies upon the Throne, and tells
 Of glorious acts by saints and angels done;
 The record of the holy, just, and good.

Of all the phantoms fleeting in the mist 410
 Of Time, though meagre all, and ghostly thin,
 Most unsubstantial, unessential shade
 Was earthly Fame. She was a voice alone,
 And dwelt upon the noisy tongues of men.
 She never thought, but gabbled ever on,
 Applauding most what least deserved applause.
 The motive, the result, was naught to her.
 The deed alone, though dyed in human gore,
 And steeped in widow's tears, if it stood out 420
 To prominent display, she talked of much,
 And roared around it with a thousand tongues.
 As changed the wind her organ, so she changed
 Perpetually; and whom she praised to-day,
 Vexing his ear with acclamations loud,
 To-morrow blamed, and hissed him out of sight.

Such was her nature, and her practice such.
 But, O! her voice was sweet to mortal ears,
 And touched so pleasantly the strings of pride
 And vanity, which in the heart of man
 Were ever strung harmonious to her note, 430
 That many thought, to live without her song
 Was rather death than life. To live unknown,
 Unnoticed, unrenowned! to die unpraised,
 Unepitaphed! to go down to the pit,
 And moulder into dust among vile worms,
 And leave no whispering of a name on earth!—
 Such thought was cold about the heart, and chilled
 The blood. Who could endure it? who could choose,
 Without a struggle, to be swept away

From all remembrance, and have part no more 440
 With living men? Philosophy failed here,
 And self-approving pride. Hence it became
 The aim of most, and main pursuit, to win
 A name, to leave some vestige as they passed,
 That following ages might discern, they once
 Had been on earth, and acted something there.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried.
 The man of science to the shade retired,
 And laid his head upon his hand, in mood
 Of awful thoughtfulness, and dived, and dived 450
 Again, deeper and deeper still, to sound
 The cause remote ; resolved, before he died,
 To make some grand discovery, by which
 He should be known to all posterity.

And in the silent vigils of the night,
 When uninspired men reposed, the bard,
 Ghastly of countenance, and from his eye
 Oft streaming wild unearthly fire, sat up,
 And sent imagination forth, and searched
 The far and near, heaven, earth, and gloomy hell, 460
 For fiction new, for thought, unthought before ;
 And when some curious, rare idea peered
 Upon his mind, he dipped his hasty pen,
 And by the glimmering lamp, or moonlight beam
 That through his lattice peeped, wrote fondly down,
 What seemed in truth imperishable song.

And sometimes too, the reverend divine,
 In meditation deep of holy things
 And vanities of Time, heard Fame's sweet voice
 Approach his ear ; and hung another flower, 470
 Of earthly sort, about the sacred truth ;
 And ventured whiles to mix the bitter text,
 With relish suited to the sinner's taste.

And oft-times too, the simple hind, who seemed
 Ambitionless, arrayed in humble garb,

While round him, spreading, fed his harmless flock,
 Sitting was seen, by some wild warbling brook,
 Carving his name upon his favourite staff;
 Or, in ill-favoured letters, tracing it
 Upon the aged thorn, or on the face 480
 Of some conspicuous, oft-frequented stone,
 With persevering, wondrous industry;
 And hoping, as he toiled amain, and saw
 The characters take form, some other wight,
 Long after he was dead and in the grave,
 Should loiter there at noon, and read his name.

In purple some, and some in rags, stood forth
 For reputation. Some displayed a limb
 Well-fashioned; some, of lowlier mind, a cane
 Of curious workmanship and marvellous twist. 490
 In strength some sought it, and in beauty more
 Long, long, the fair one laboured at the glass,
 And, being tired, called in auxiliar skill,
 To have her sails, before she went abroad,
 Full spread and nicely set, to catch the gale
 Of praise; and much she caught, and much deserved,
 When outward loveliness was index fair
 Of purity within: but oft, alas!
 The bloom was on the skin alone; and when
 She saw, sad sight! the roses on her cheek 500
 Wither, and heard the voice of Fame retire
 And die away, she heaved most piteous sighs,
 And wept most lamentable tears; and whiles,
 In wild delirium, made rash attempt,
 Unholy mimicry of Nature's work!
 To re-create, with frail and mortal things,
 Her withered face. Attempt how fond and vain!
 Her frame itself soon mouldered down to dust;
 And, in the land of deep forgetfulness,
 Her beauty and her name were laid beside 510
 Eternal silence and the loathsome worm;
 Into whose darkness flattery ventured not;
 Where none had ears to hear the voice of Fame.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried,
 And awful oft the wickedness they wrought.
 To be observed, some scrambled up to thrones,
 And sat in vestures dripping wet with gore.
 The warrior dipped his sword in blood, and wrote
 His name on lands and cities desolate.
 The rich bought fields, and houses built, and raised 520
 The monumental piles up to the clouds,
 And called them by their names: and, strange to tell!
 Rather than be unknown, and pass away
 Obscurely to the grave, some, small of soul,
 That else had perished unobserved, acquired
 Considerable renown by oaths profane;
 By jesting boldly with all sacred things;
 And uttering fearlessly whate'er occurred;
 Wild, blasphemous, perditionable thoughts,
 That Satan in them moved; by wiser men 530
 Suppressed, and quickly banished from the mind.

Many the roads they took, the plans they tried.
 But all in vain. Who grasped at earthly fame,
 Grasped wind; nay worse, a serpent grasped, that thro'
 His hand slid smoothly, and was gone; but left
 A sting behind which wrought him endless pain.
 For oft her voice was old Abaddon's lure,
 By which he charmed the foolish soul to death.

So happiness was sought in pleasure, gold,
 Renown, by many sought. But should I sing 540
 Of all the trifling race, my time, thy faith
 Would fail, of things erectly organized,
 And having rational articulate voice,
 And claiming outward brotherhood with man,
 Of him that labored sorely, in his sweat
 Smoking afar, then hurried to the wine,
 Deliberately resolving to be mad;
 Of him who taught the ravenous bird to fly
 This way or that, thereby supremely blest;
 Or rode in fury with the howling pack, 550
 Affronting much the noble animal,

He spurred into such company ; of him
Who down into the bowels of the earth
Descended deeply, to bring up the wreck
Of some old earthen ware, which having stowed,
With every proper care, he home returned
O'er many a sea, and many a league of land
Triumphantly to show the marvellous prize ;
And him that vexed his brain and theories built
Of gossamer upon the brittle winds, 560
Perplexed exceedingly why shells were found
Upon the mountain tops but wondering not
Why shells were found at all, more wondrous still !
Of him who strange enjoyment took in tales
Of fairy folk, and sleepless ghosts, and sounds
Unearthly, whispering in the ear of night
Disastrous things ; and him who still foretold
Calamity which never came, and lived
In terror all his days of comets rude,
That should unmannerly and lawless drive 570
Athwart the path of earth, and burn mankind ;
As if the appointed hour of doom, by God
Appointed, ere its time should come ! as if
Too small the number of substantial ills,
And real fears, to vex the sons of men.
These, had they not possessed immortal souls,
And been accountable, might have been passed
With laughter, and forgot ; but, as it was,
And is, their folly asks a serious tear.

Keen was the search, and various, and wide, 580
For happiness. Take one example more,
So strange, that common fools looked on amazed
And wise and sober men together drew,
And trembling stood ; and angels in the heavens
Grew pale, and talked of vengeance as at hand ;—
The sceptic's route, the unbeliever's, who,
Despising reason, revelation, God,
And kicking 'gainst the pricks of conscience, rushed
Deliriously upon the bossy shield
Of the Omnipotent ; and in his heart 590

Purposed to deify the idol Chance ;
 And labored hard,—oh, labor worse than naught !—
 And toiled with dark and crooked reasoning,
 To make the fair and lovely earth, which dwelt
 In sight of Heaven, a cold and fatherless,
 Forsaken thing, that wandered on, forlorn,
 Undestined, uncompassioned, unupheld ;
 A vapour eddying in the whirl of chance,
 And soon to vanish everlastingly.
 He travailed sorely, and made many a tack, 600
 His sails oft shifting, to arrive,—dread thought !—
 Arrive at utter nothingness ; and have
 Being no more, no feeling, memory,
 No lingering consciousness that e'er he was.
 Guilt's midnight wish ! last, most abhorred thought '
 Most desperate effort of extremest sin !
 Others, pre-occupied, ne'er saw true Hope :
 He, seeing, aimed to stab her to the heart,
 And with infernal chymistry to wring
 The last sweet drop from Sorrow's cup of gall , 610
 To quench the only ray that cheered the earth,
 And leave mankind in night which had no star.
 Others the streams of Pleasure troubled ; he
 Toiled much to dry her very fountain head.
 Unpardonable man ! sold under sin !
 He was the devil's pioneer, who cut
 The fences down of Virtue, sapped her walls,
 And opened a smooth and easy way to death.
 Traitor to all existence, to all life !
 Soul-suicide ! determined foe of being, 620
 Intended murderer of God, Most High !
 Strange road, most strange ! to seek for happiness !
 Hell's mad-houses are full of such, too fierce,
 Too furiously insane, and desperate,
 To rage unbound 'mong evil spirits damned.

Fertile was earth in many things, not least
 In fools, who mercy both and judgment scorned,
 Scorned love, experience scorned, and onward rushed
 To swift destruction, giving all reproof,

And all instruction, to the winds; and much 630
Of both they had, and much despised of both.

Wisdom took up her harp, and stood in place
Of frequent concourse, stood in every gate,
By every way, and walked in every street;
And, lifting up her voice, proclaimed: "Be wise,
Ye fools! be of an understanding heart;
Forsake the wicked, come not near his house,
Pass by, make haste, depart and turn away.
Me follow, me, whose ways are pleasantness,
Whose paths are peace, whose end is perfect joy." 640
The Seasons came and went, and went and came,
To teach men gratitude; and as they passed,
Gave warning of the lapse of Time, that else
Had stolen unheeded by. The gentle Flowers,
Retired, and, stooping o'er the wilderness,
Talked of humility, and peace, and love.
The Dews came down unseen at evening-tide,
And silently their bounties shed, to teach
Mankind unostentatious charity.
With arm in arm the forest rose on high, 650
And lesson gave of brotherly regard.
And, on the rugged mountain-brow exposed,
Bearing the blast alone, the ancient oak
Stood, lifting high his mighty arm, and still
To courage in distress exhorted loud.
The flocks, the herds, the birds, the streams, the breeze,
Attuned the heart to melody and love.
Mercy stood in the cloud, with eye that wept
Essential love; and, from her glorious bow,
Bending to kiss the earth in token of peace, 660
With her own lips, her gracious lips, which God
Of sweetest accent made she whispered still,
She whispered to Revenge, Forgive, forgive.
The Sun, rejoicing round the earth, announced
Daily the wisdom, power, and love of God.
The Moon awoke, and from her maiden face,
Shedding her cloudy locks, looked meekly forth,
And with her virgin Stars walked in the heavens,

Walked nightly there, conversing as she walked,
 Of purity, and holiness, and God. 670
 In dreams and visions, sleep instructed much.
 Day uttered speech to day, and night to night
 Taught knowledge. Silence had a tongue; the grave,
 The darkness, and the lonely waste, had each
 A tongue, that ever said, Man! think of God!
 Think of thyself! think of eternity!
 Fear God, the thunders said; Fear God, the waves.
 Fear God, the lightning of the storm replied.
 Fear God, deep loudly answered back to deep:
 And, in the temples of the Holy One, 670
 Messiah's messengers, the faithful few,
 Faithful 'mong many false, the Bible opened,
 And cried, Repent! repent, ye sons of men!
 Believe, be saved; and reasoned awfully
 Of temperance, righteousness, and judgment soon
 To come, of ever-during life and death:
 And chosen bards from age to age awoke
 The sacred lyre, and full on Folly's ear,
 Numbers of righteous indignation poured:
 And God, omnipotent, when mercy failed, 690
 Made bare his holy arm, and with the stroke
 Of vengeance smote; the fountains of the deep
 Broke up, heaven's windows opened, and sent on men
 A flood of wrath, sent plague and famine forth;
 With earthquake rocked the world beneath, with
 storms
 Above laid cities waste, and turned fat lands
 To barrenness, and with the sword of war
 In fury marched, and gave them blood to drink.
 Angels remonstrated, Mercy beseeched,
 Heaven smiled and frowned, Hell groaned, Time fled,
 Death shook 700
 His dart, and threatened to make repentance vain,—
 Incredible assertion! men rushed on
 Determinedly to ruin; shut their ears,
 Their eyes, to all advice, to all reproof;
 O'er mercy and o'er judgment, downward rushed
 To misery; and,—most incredible

Of all !—to misery rushed, along the way
 Of disappointment and remorse, where still,
 At every step, adders, in pleasure's form,
 Stung mortally ; and Joys,—whose bloomy cheeks 710
 Seemed glowing high with immortality,
 Whose bosoms prophesied superfluous bliss,—
 While in the arms received, and locked in close
 And riotous embrace, turned pale, and cold,
 And died, and smelled of putrefaction rank ;
 Turned, in the very moment of delight,
 A loathsome, heavy corpse, that with the clear
 And hollow eyes of death, stared horribly.

All tribes, all generations of the earth,
 Thus wantonly to ruin drove alike. 720
 We heard indeed of golden and silver days,
 And of primeval innocence unstained :
 A pagan tale ! but by baptized bards,
 Philosophers, and statesmen, who were still
 Held wise and cunning men, talked of so much,
 That most believed it so, and asked not why.

The pair, the family first made, were ill ;
 And for their great peculiar sin, incurred
 The Curse, and left it due to all their race ;
 And bold example gave of every crime, 730
 Hate, murder, unbelief, reproach, revenge.
 A time, 'tis true, there came, of which thou soon
 Shalt hear, the Sabbath Day, the Jubilee
 Of earth, when righteousness and peace prevailed.
 This time except, who writes the history
 Of men, and writes it true, must write them bad ;
 Who reads, must read of violence and blood.
 The man, who could the story of one day
 Peruse, the wrongs, oppressions, cruelties,
 Deceits, and perjuries, and vanities, 740
 Rewarded worthlessness, rejected worth,
 Assassinations, robberies, thefts, and wars,
 Disastrous accidents, life thrown away,
 Divinity insulted, Heaven despised,

Religion scorned,—and not been sick at night,
And sad,—had gathered greater store of mirth,
Than ever wise man in the world could find.

One cause of folly, one especial cause,
Was this: Few knew what wisdom was, though well
Defined in God's own words, and printed large, 750
On heaven and earth in characters of light,
And sounded in the ear by every wind.

Wisdom is humble, said the voice of God.
'Tis proud, the world replied. Wisdom, said God,
Forgives, forbears, and suffers, not for fear
Of man, but God. Wisdom revenges, said
The world; is quick and deadly of resentment,
Thrusts at the very shadow of affront.
And hastes, by death, to wipe its honour clean.
Wisdom, said God, loves enemies, entreats, 760
Solicits, begs for peace. Wisdom, replied
The world; hates enemies, will not ask peace,
Conditions spurns, and triumphs in their fall.
Wisdom mistrusts itself, and leans on Heaven,
Said God. It trusts and leans upon itself,
The world replied. Wisdom retires, said God,
And counts it bravery to bear reproach,
And shame, and lowly poverty, upright;
And weeps with all who have just cause to weep.
Wisdom, replied the world. struts forth to gaze, 770
Treads the broad stage of life with clamorous foot,
Attracts all praises, counts it bravery
Alone to wield the sword, and rush on death;
And never weeps, but for its own disgrace.
Wisdom, said God, is highest, when it stoops
Lowest before the Holy Throne; throws down
Its crown, abased; forgets itself, admires,
And breathes adoring praise. There Wisdom stoops,
Indeed, the world replied, there stoops, because
It must, but stoops with dignity; and thinks 780
And meditates the while of inward worth.

Thus did Almighty God,¹ and thus the world,
 Wisdom define : and most the world believed,
 And boldly called the truth of God a lie.
 Hence, he that to the worldly wisdom shaped
 His character, became the favourite
 Of men, was honourable termed, a man
 Of spirit, noble, glorious, lofty soul !
 And as he crossed the earth in chase of dreams,
 Received prodigious shouts of warm applause. 790
 Hence, who to godly wisdom framed his life,
 Was counted mean, and spiritless, and vile ;
 And as he walked obscurely in the path
 Which led to heaven, fools hissed with serpent tongue,
 And poured contempt upon his holy head,
 And poured contempt on all who praised his name.

But false as this account of wisdom was,
 The world's I mean, it was its best, the creed
 Of sober, grave, and philosophic men,
 With much research and cogitation framed, 800
 Of men who with the vulgar scorned to sit.

The popular belief seemed rather worse,
 When heard replying to the voice of truth.

The wise man, said the Bible, walks with God ;
 Surveys, far on, the endless line of life ;
 Values his soul, thinks of eternity,
 Both worlds considers, and provides for both ;
 With Reason's eye his passions guards ; abstains
 From evil ; lives on hope, on hope, the fruit
 Of faith ; looks upward, purifies his soul, 810
 Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky ;
 Passes the sun, and gains his father's house,
 And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss.

The multitude aloud replied,—replied
 By practice, for they were not bookish men,
 Nor apt to form their principles in words,—
 The wise man, first of all, eradicates,

As much as possible, from out his mind,
 All thought of death, God, and eternity;
 Admires the world, and thinks of Time alone; 820
 Avoids the Bible, all reproof avoids;
 Rocks Conscience, if he can, asleep; puts out
 The eye of Reason, prisons, tortures, binds,
 And makes her thus, by violence and force,
 Give wicked evidence against herself;
 Lets passion loose, the substance leaves, pursues
 The shadow vehemently, but ne'er o'ertakes;
 Puts by the cup of holiness and joy;
 And drinks, carouses deeply, in the bowl
 Of death; grovels in dust, pollutes, destroys, 830
 His soul; is miserable to acquire
 More misery; deceives to be deceived;
 Strives, labours to the last, to shun the truth;
 Strives, labours to the last, to damn himself;
 Turns desperate, shudders, groans, blasphemes, and dies,
 And sinks—where could he else?—to endless wo'
 And drinks the wine of God's eternal wrath.

The learned thus, and thus the unlearned world,
 Wisdom defined. In sound they disagreed;
 In substance, in effect, in end, the same; 840
 And equally to God and truth opposed,
 Opposed as darkness to the light of heaven.
 Yet were there some, that seemed well-meaning men,
 Who systems planned, expressed in supple words,
 Which praised the man as wisest, that in one
 United both; pleased God, and pleased the world;
 And with the saint, and with the sinner, had,
 Changing his garb, unseen, a good report.
 And many thought their definition best;
 And in their wisdom grew exceeding wise. 850

Union abhorred! dissimulation vain!
 Could Holiness embrace the harlot Sin?
 Could life wed death? Could God with Mammon
 dwell?
 Oh, foolish men! oh, men for ever lost!

In spite of mercy lost, in spite of wrath !
 In spite of Disappointment and Remorse,
 Which made the way to ruin, ruinous !

Hear what they were : The progeny of Sin,
 Alike, and oft combined ; but differing much
 In mode of giving pain. As felt the gross, 860
 Material part, when in the furnace cast,
 So felt the soul, the victim of Remorse.
 It was a fire which on the verge of God's
 Commandments burned, and on the vitals fed
 Of all who passed. Who passed, there met Remorse,
 A violent fever seized his soul ; the heavens
 Above, the earth beneath, seemed glowing brass,
 Heated seven times ; he heard dread voices speak,
 And mutter horrid prophecies of pain,
 Severer and severer yet to come ; 870
 And as he writhed and quivered, scorched within,
 The Fury round his torrid temples flapped
 Her fiery wings, and breathed upon his lips
 And parched tongue the withered blasts of hell.
 It was the suffering begun, thou sawst
 In symbol of the Worm that never dies.

The other, Disappointment, rather seemed
 Negation of delight. It was a thing
 Sluggish and torpid, tending towards death.
 Its breath was cold, and made the sportive blood 880
 Stagnant, and dull, and heavy, round the wheels
 Of life. The roots of that whereon it blew,
 Decayed, and with the genial soil no more
 Held sympathy ; the leaves, the branches drooped,
 And mouldered slowly down to formless dust ;
 Not tossed and driven by violence of winds,
 But withering where they sprung, and rotting there
 Long disappointed, disappointed still,
 The hopeless man, hopeless in his main wish,
 As if returning back to nothing, felt ; 890
 In strange vacuity of being hung,
 And rolled and rolled his eye on emptiness,
 That seemed to grow more empty every hour.

One of this mood I do remember well
 We name him not,—what now are earthly names ?—
 In humble dwelling born, retired, remote ;
 In rural quietude, 'mong hills, and streams.
 And melancholy deserts, where the Sun
 Saw, as he passed, a shepherd only, here
 And there, watching his little flock, or heard 900
 The ploughman talking to his steers ; his hopes,
 His morning hopes, awoke before him, smiling,
 Among the dews and holy mountain airs ;
 And fancy coloured them with every hue
 Of heavenly loveliness. But soon his dreams
 Of childhood fled away, those rainbow dreams,
 So innocent and fair, that withered Age,
 Even at the grave, cleared up his dusty eye,
 And, passing all between, looked fondly back
 To see them once again, ere he departed : 910
 These fled away, and anxious thought, that wished
 To go, yet whither knew not well to go,
 Possessed his soul, and held it still awhile.
 He listened, and heard from far the voice of fame,
 Heard and was charmed ; and deep and sudden vow
 Of resolution, made to be renowned ;
 And deeper vowed again to keep his vow.
 His parents saw, his parents, whom God made
 Of kindest heart, saw, and indulged his hope.
 The ancient page he turned, read much, thought
 much, 920
 And with old bards of honourable name
 Measured his soul severely ; and looked up
 To fame, ambitious of no second place.
 Hope grew from inward faith, and promised fair.
 And out before him opened many a path
 Ascending, where the laurel highest waved
 Her branch of endless green. He stood admiring,
 But stood, admired, not long. The harp he seized,
 The harp he loved, loved better than his life,
 The harp which uttered deepest notes, and held 930
 The ear of thought a captive to its song.
 He searched and meditated much, and whiles,

With rapturous hand, in secret, touched the lyre,
 Aiming at glorious strains : and searched again
 For theme deserving of immortal verse ;
 Chose now, and now refused, unsatisfied ;
 Pleased, then displeased, and hesitating still.

Thus stood his mind, when round him came a cloud,
 Slowly and heavily it came, a cloud
 Of ills, we mention not. Enough to say, 940
 'Twas cold, and dead, impenetrable gloom.
 He saw its dark approach, and saw his hopes,
 One after one, put out, as nearer still
 It drew his soul ; but fainted not at first,
 Fainted not soon. He knew the lot of man
 Was troubled, and prepared to bear the worst ;
 Endure whate'er should come, without a sigh
 Endure, and drink, even to the very dregs,
 The bitterest cup that Time could measure out ;
 And, having done, look up, and ask for more. 950

He called philosophy, and with his heart
 Reasoned. He called religion too, but called
 Reluctantly, and therefore was not heard.
 Ashamed to be o'ermatched by earthly woes,
 He sought, and sought, with eye that dimmed apace,
 To find some avenue to light, some place
 On which to rest a hope ; but sought in vain.
 Darker and darker still the darkness grew.
 At length he sunk, and Disappointment stood
 His only comforter, and mournfully 960
 Told all was passed. His interest in life,
 In being, ceased : and now he seemed to feel,
 And shuddered as he felt, his powers of mind
 Decaying in the spring-time of his day.
 The vigorous, weak became, the clear, obscure.
 Memory gave up her charge, Decision reeled,
 And from her flight, Fancy returned, returned
 Because she found no nourishment abroad.
 The blue heavens withered, and the moon, and sun,
 And all the stars, and the green earth, and morn 970

And evening, withered ; and the eyes, and smiles,
 And faces, of all men and women, withered ;
 Withered to him ; and all the universe,
 Like something which had been, appeared ; but now
 Was dead and mouldering fast away. He tried
 No more to hope, wished to forget his vow,
 Wished to forget his harp ; then ceased to wish.
 That was his last. Enjoyment now was done
 He had no hope, no wish, and scarce a fear.
 Of being sensible, and sensible 980
 Of loss, he as some atom seemed, which God
 Had made superfluously, and needed not
 To build creation with ; but back again
 To nothing threw, and left it in the void,
 With everlasting sense that once it was.

Oh ! who can tell what days, what nights, he spent,
 Of tideless, waveless, sailless, shoreless wo !
 And who can tell how many, glorious once,
 To others and themselves of promise full,
 Conducted to this pass of human thought, 990
 This wilderness of intellectual death,
 Wasted and pined, and vanished from the earth,
 Leaving no vestige of memorial there !

It was not so with him. When thus he lay,
 Forlorn of heart, withered and desolate,
 As leaf of Autumn, which the wolfish winds,
 Selecting from its falling sisters, chase,
 Far from its native grove, to lifeless wastes,
 And leave it there alone, to be forgotten
 Eternally, God passed in mercy by,— 1000
 His praise be ever new !—and on him breathed,
 And bade him live, and put into his hands
 A holy harp, into his lips a song,
 That rolled its numbers down the tide of Time :
 Ambitious now but little, to be praised
 Of men alone ; ambitious most, to be
 Approved of God, the Judge of all ; and have
 His name recorded in the book of life.

Such things were Disappointment and Remorse.
 And oft united both, as friends severe, 1010
 To teach men wisdom ; but the fool, untaught,
 Was foolish still. His ear he stopped, his eyes
 He shut, and blindly, deafly obstinate,
 Forced desperately his way from wo to wo.

One place, one only place, there was on earth,
 Where no man e'er was fool, however mad
 "Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."
 Ah ! 'twas a truth most true ; and sung in Time,
 And to the sons of men, by one well known
 On earth for lofty verse and lofty sense. 1020
 Much hast thou seen, fair youth, much heard ; but thou
 Hast never seen a death bed, never heard
 A dying groan. Men saw it often. 'Twas sad,
 To all most sorrowful and sad ; to guilt,
 'Twas anguish, terror, darkness, without bow.
 But, oh ! it had a most convincing tongue,
 A potent oratory, that secured
 Most mute attention ; and it spoke the truth
 So boldly, plainly, perfectly distinct,
 That none the meaning could mistake, or doubt ; 1030
 And had withal a disenchanting power,
 A most omnipotent and wondrous power,
 Which in a moment broke, for ever broke,
 And utterly dissolved, the charms, and spells,
 And cunning sorceries of earth and hell.
 And thus it spoke to him who ghastly lay,
 And struggled for another breath : Earth's cup
 Is poisoned ; her renown, most infamous ;
 Her gold, seem as it may, is really dust ; [1040
 Her titles, slanderous names ; her praise, reproach,
 Her strength, an idiot's boast ; her wisdom, blind,
 Her gain, eternal loss ; her hope, a dream ;
 Her love, her friendship, enmity with God ;
 Her promises, a lie ; her smile, a harlot's ;
 Her beauty, paint, and rotten within ; her pleasures,
 Deadly assassins masked ; her laughter, grief ;
 Her breasts, the sting of Death ; her total sum,

Her all ! most utter vanity ; and all
Her lovers mad, insane most grievously,
And most insane because they know it not. 1050

Thus did the mighty reasoner, Death, declare,
And volumes more ; and in one word confirmed
The Bible whole, Eternity is all.
But few spectators, few believed, of those
Who staid behind. The wisest, best of men,
Believed not to the letter full ; but turned,
And on the world looked forth, as if they thought
The well-trimmed hypocrite had something still
Of inward worth. The dying man alone,
Gave faithful audience, and the words of Death, 1060
To the last jot, believed, believed and felt ;
But oft, alas ! believed and felt too late.

And had Earth, then, no joys, no native sweets,
No happiness, that one, who spoke the truth,
Might call her own ? She had ; true, native sweets,
Indigenous delights, which up the tree
Of holiness, embracing as they grew,
Ascended, and bore fruit of heavenly taste ;
In pleasant memory held, and talked of oft,
By yonder Saints, who walk the golden streets 1070
Of New Jerusalem, and compass round
The Throne, with nearest vision blessed. Of these,
Hereafter, thou shalt hear, delighted hear ;—
One page of beauty in the life of man.

COURSE OF TIME.

Book XV.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK IV.

Sketches are given by the Bard of several features in the history and affairs of man, which appeared wonderful.

One singular feature was the universal love of independence united with lust for power, so that the essence of "earth's liberty" was, after all its praises, nothing but this; "each sought to make all subject to his will;" but *real* liberty was the freedom from sin and passion, effected by the truth and spirit of God.

A wonderful phenomenon appeared in the Christian heart. This exhibited a scene of strangest conflicts between opposite principles, and inconsistent emotions. But the final victory was found on the side of holiness; and the Christian, after all his internal struggles, and all the abuse and slander of Earth, was brought in triumph to the world of glory.

The Books composed in Time presented also an occasion of wonder. They were numerous as the swarms of locusts sent on rebellious Egypt, but, like their authors, went to oblivion under the curse that returns dust to kindred dust.

Various things in the government and providence of God, furnished ground of wonder among men. The origin of evil, the predestination of accountable actions, the mystery of the Trinity and Incarnation, were subjects which Theology and Philosophy and Fancy toiled in vain to comprehend.

There seemed something wondrous in the unequal distribution of worldly possessions and intellectual gifts. But the Providence of God plainly taught that He did not estimate men by their outward circumstances or their mere talents, but by their *moral worth*. A pertinent and affecting illustration is found in the history of the gifted, wretched Byron.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book IV.

THE world had much of strange and wonderful,
In passion much, in action, reason, will,
And much in Providence, which still retired
From human eye, and led Philosophy,
That ill her ignorance liked to own, through dark
And dangerous paths of speculation wild.
Some striking features, as we pass, we mark,
In order such as memory suggests.

One passion prominent appears, the lust
Of power, which oft-times took the fairer name 10
Of liberty, and hung the popular flag
Of freedom out. Many, indeed, its names.
When on the throne it sat, and round the neck
Of millions riveted its iron chain,
And on the shoulders of the people laid
Burdens unmerciful, it title took
Of tyranny, oppression, despotism;
And every tongue was weary cursing it.
When in the multitude it gathered strength,
And, like an ocean bursting from its bounds, 20
Long beat in vain, went forth resistlessly,
It bore the stamp and designation, then,

Of popular fury, anarchy, rebellion;
 And honest men bewailed all order void;
 All laws annulled; all property destroyed;
 'The venerable, murdered in the streets;
 The wise, despised; streams, red with human blood;
 Harvests, beneath the frantic foot trod down;
 Lands, desolate; and famine at the door.

These are a part; but other names it had, 30
 Innumerable as the shapes and robes it wore.
 But under every name, in nature still
 Invariably the same, and always bad.
 We own, indeed, that oft against itself
 It fought, and sceptre both and people gave
 An equal aid; as long exemplified
 In Albion's isle, Albion, queen of the seas;
 And in the struggle, something like a kind
 Of civil liberty grew up, the best
 Of mere terrestrial root; but, sickly, too, 40
 And living only, strange to tell! in strife
 Of factions equally contending; dead,
 That very moment dead, that one prevailed.

Conflicting cruelly against itself,
 By its own hand it fell; part slaying part.
 And men who noticed not the suicide,
 Stood wondering much, why earth, from age to age,
 Was still enslaved; and erring causes gave.

This was earth's liberty, its nature this, 50
 However named, in whomsoever found,—
 And found it was in all of woman born,—
 Each man to make all subject to his will;
 To make them do, undo, eat, drink, stand, move,
 Talk, think, and feel, exactly as he chose.
 Hence the eternal strife of brotherhoods,
 Of individuals, families, commonwealths.
 The root from which it grew was pride; bad root,
 And bad the fruit it bore. Then wonder not,
 That long the nations from it richly reaped

Oppression, slavery, tyranny, and war ; 60
 Confusion, desolation, trouble, shame.
 And, marvellous though it seem, this monster, when
 It took the name of slavery, as oft
 It did, had advocates to plead its cause ;
 Beings that walked erect, and spoke like men ;
 Of Christian parentage descended, too,
 And dipped in the baptismal font, as sign
 Of dedication to the Prince who bowed
 To death, to set the sin-bound prisoner free.

Unchristian thought ! on what pretence soe'er 70
 Of right, inherited, or else acquired ;
 Of loss, or profit, or what plea you name,
 To buy and sell, to barter, whip, and hold
 In chains, a being of celestial make ;
 Of kindred form, of kindred faculties,
 Of kindred feelings, passions, thoughts, desires ;
 Born free, and heir of an immortal hope :
 Thought villanous, absurd, detestable !
 Unworthy to be harbored in a fiend !
 And only overreached in wickedness 80
 By that, birth, too, of earthly liberty,
 Which aimed to make a reasonable man
 By legislation think, and by the sword
 Believe. This was that liberty renowned,
 Those equal rights of Greece and Rome, where men,
 All, but a few, were bought, and sold, and scourged,
 And killed, as interest or caprice enjoined ;
 In after times talked of, written of, so much,
 That most, by sound and custom led away,
 Believed the essence answered to the name. 90
 Historians on this theme were long and warm.
 Statesmen, drunk with the fumes of vain debate,
 In lofty swelling phrase, called it perfection.
 Philosophers its rise, advance, and fall,
 Traced carefully : and poets kindled still,
 As memory brought it up ; their lips were touched
 With fire, and uttered words that men adored.
 Even he, true bard of Zion, holy man !

To whom the Bible taught this precious verse,
 "He is the freeman whom the truth makes free," 100
 By fashion, though by fashion little swayed,
 Scarce kept his harp from pagan freedom's praise.

The captive prophet, whom Jehovah gave
 The future years, described it best, when he
 Beheld it rise in vision of the night :
 A dreadful beast, and terrible, and strong
 Exceedingly, with mighty iron teeth;
 And, lo, it brake in pieces, and devoured,
 And stamped the residue beneath its feet !

True liberty was Christian, sanctified, 110
 Baptized, and found in Christian hearts alone ;
 First-born of Virtue, daughter of the skies,
 Nursling of truth divine, sister of all
 The graces, meekness, holiness, and love ;
 Giving to God, and man, and all below,
 That symptom showed of sensible existence,
 Their due, unasked ; fear to whom fear was due ;
 To all, respect, benevolence, and love ;
 Companion of religion, where she came,
 There freedom came ; where dwelt, there freedom
 dwelt, 120
 Ruled where she ruled, expired where she expired.

"He was the freeman whom the truth made free,"
 Who, first of all, the bands of Satan broke ;
 Who broke the bands of sin ; and for his soul,
 In spite of fools, consulted seriously ;
 In spite of fashion, persevered in good ;
 In spite of wealth or poverty, upright ;
 Who did as reason, not as fancy, bade ;
 Who heard temptation sing, and yet turned not
 Aside ; saw Sin bedeck her flowery bed, 130
 And yet would not go up ; felt at his heart
 The sword unsheathed, yet would not sell the truth ;
 Who, having power, had not the will to hurt ;
 Who blushed alike to be, or have a slave ;

Who blushed at naught but sin, feared naught but God ;
 Who, finally, in strong integrity
 Of soul, 'midst want, or riches, or disgrace,
 Uplifted, calmly sat, and heard the waves
 Of stormy folly breaking at his feet, [140
 Now shrill with praise, now hoarse with foul reproach,
 And both despised sincerely ; seeking this
 Alone, The approbation of his God,
 Which still with conscience witnessed to his peace.

This, this is freedom, such as angels use,
 And kindred to the liberty of God.
 First-born of Virtue, daughter of the skies !
 The man, the state, in whom she ruled, was free ,
 All else were slaves of Satan, Sin, and Death.

Already thou hast something heard of good
 And ill, of vice and virtue, perfect each ; 150
 Of those redeemed, or else abandoned quite ;
 And more shalt hear, when, at the judgment-day,
 The characters of mankind we review.
 Seems aught which thou hast heard astonishing ?
 A greater wonder now thy audience asks ;
 Phenomena in all the universe,
 Of moral being most anomalous,
 Inexplicable most, and wonderful.
 I'll introduce thee to a single heart,
 A human heart. We enter not the worst, 160
 But one by God's renewing Spirit touched,
 A Christian heart, awaked from sleep of sin.
 What seest thou here ? what markst ? Observe it well.
 Will, passion, reason, hopes, fears, joy, distress,
 Peace, turbulence, simplicity, deceit,
 Good, ill, corruption, immortality,
 A temple of the Holy Ghost, and yet
 Oft lodging fiends ; the dwelling-place of all
 The heavenly virtues, charity and truth,
 Humility, and holiness, and love ; 270
 And yet the common haunt of anger, pride,
 Hatred, revenge, and passions foul with lust ;

Allied to heaven, yet parleying oft with hell;
 A soldier listed in Messiah's band,
 Yet giving quarter to Abaddon's troops;
 With seraphs drinking from the well of life,
 And yet carousing in the cup of death;
 An heir of heaven, and walking thitherward,
 Yet casting back a covetous eye on earth.
 Emblem of strength, and weakness; loving now, 180
 And now abhorring sin; indulging now,
 And now repenting sore; rejoicing now,
 With joy unspeakable, and full of glory;
 Now weeping bitterly, and clothed in dust;
 A man willing to do, and doing not;
 Doing, and willing not; embracing what
 He hates, what most he loves abandoning;
 Half saint, and sinner half; half life, half death;
 Commixture strange of heaven, and earth, and hell.

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What seest thou here? what markst? A battle-field,
 Two banners spread, two dreadful fronts of war
 In shock of opposition fierce, engaged.
 God, angels, saw whole empires rise in arms,
 Saw kings exalted, heard them tumble down,
 And others raised,—and heeded not; but here
 God, angels, looked; God, angels, fought; and Hell,
 With all his legions, fought: here, error fought
 With truth, with darkness light, and life with death;
 And here, not kingdoms, reputations, worlds,
 Were won; the strife was for eternity, 200
 The victory was never-ending bliss,
 The badge, a chaplet from the tree of life.

While thus, within, contending armies strove,
 Without, the Christian had his troubles too.
 For, as by God's unalterable laws,
 And ceremonial of the Heaven of Heavens,
 Virtue takes place of all, and worthiest deeds
 Sit highest at the feast of bliss; on earth,
 The opposite was fashion's rule polite.
 Virtue the lowest place at table took, 210

Or served, or was shut out: the Christian still
 Was mocked, derided, persecuted, slain;
 And Slander, worse than mockery, or sword,
 Or death, stood nightly by her horrid forge,
 And fabricated lies to stain his name,
 And wound his peace; but still he had a source
 Of happiness, that men could neither give
 Nor take away. The avenues that led
 To immortality before him lay.
 He saw, with faith's far-reaching eye, the fount 220
 Of life, his Father's house, his Saviour God,
 And borrowed thence to help his present want.

Encountered thus with enemies, without,
 Within, like bark that meets opposing winds
 And floods, this way, now that, she steers athwart,
 Tossed by the wave, and driven by the storm;
 But still the pilot, ancient at the helm,
 The harbor keeps in eye; and after much
 Of danger passed, and many a prayer rude,
 He runs her safely in: so was the man 230
 Of God beset, so tossed by adverse winds;
 And so his eye upon the land of life
 He kept. Virtue grew daily stronger, sin
 Decayed; his enemies, repulsed, retired;
 Till, at the stature of a perfect man
 In Christ arrived, and with the Spirit filled,
 He gained the harbour of eternal rest.

But think not virtue, else than dwells in God
 Essentially, was perfect, without spot.
 Examine yonder suns. At distance seen, 240
 How bright they burn; how gloriously they shine,
 Mantling the worlds around in beamy light!
 But nearer viewed, we through their lustre see
 Some dark behind; so virtue was on earth,
 So is in heaven, and so shall always be.
 Though good it seem, immaculate, and fair
 Exceedingly, to saint or angel's gaze,
 The uncreated Eye, that searches all,

Sees it imperfect ; sees, but blames not ; sees,
 Well pleased, and best with those who deepest dive²⁵⁰
 Into themselves, and know themselves the most ;
 Taught thence in humbler reverence to bow
 Before the Holy One ; and oftener view
 His excellence, that in them still may rise,
 And grow his likeness, growing evermore.

Nor think that any, born of Adam's race,
 In his own proper virtue, entered heaven.
 Once fallen from God and perfect holiness,
 No being, unassisted, e'er could rise,
 Or sanctify the sin-polluted soul. 260
 Oft was the trial made, but vainly made.
 So oft as men, in earth's best livery clad,
 However fair, approached the gates of heaven,
 And stood presented to the eye of God,
 Their impious pride so oft his soul abhorred.
 Vain hope ! in patch-work of terrestrial grain,
 To be received into the courts above !
 As vain as towards yonder suns to soar,
 On wing of waxen plumage, melting soon.

Look round, and see those numbers infinite, 270
 That stand before the Throne, and in their hands
 Palms waving high, as token of victory
 For battles won. These are the sons of men
 Redeemed, the ransomed of the Lamb of God
 All these, and millions more of kindred blood,
 Who now are out on messages of love.
 All these, their virtue, beauty, excellence,
 And joy, are purchase of redeeming blood ;
 Their glory, bounty of redeeming love.

O Love divine !—Harp, lift thy voice on high. 280
 Shout, angels ! shout aloud, ye sons of men !
 And burn, my heart, with the eternal flame !
 My lyre, be eloquent with endless praise !—
 O Love divine ! immeasurable Love !
 Stooping from heaven to earth, from earth to hell,

Without beginning, endless, boundless Love !
 Above all asking, giving far, to those
 Who naught deserved, who naught deserved but death !
 Saving the vilest ! saving me ! O Love
 Divine ! O Saviour God ! O Lamb, once slain ! 290
 At thought of thee, thy love, thy flowing blood,
 All thoughts decay ; all things remembered fade ;
 All hopes return ; all actions done by men
 Or angels, disappear, absorbed and lost ;
 All fly, as from the great white Throne, which he,
 The prophet, saw, in vision wrapped, the heavens
 And earth, and sun, and moon, and starry host,
 Confounded, fled, and found a place no more.

One glance of wonder, as we pass, deserve
 The books of Time. Productive was the world 300
 In many things, but most in books. Like swarms
 Of locusts, which God sent to vex a land
 Rebellious long, admonished long in vain,
 Their numbers they poured annually on man,
 From heads conceiving still. Perpetual birth !
 Thou wonderst how the world contained them all ?
 Thy wonder stay. Like men, this was their doom,
 " That dust they were, and should to dust return."
 And oft their fathers, childless and bereaved,
 Wept o'er their graves, when they themselves were
 green ; 310

And on them fell, as fell on every age,
 As on their authors fell, oblivious Night,
 Which o'er the past lay, darkling, heavy, still,
 Impenetrable, motionless, and sad,
 Having his dismal, leaden plumage stirred
 By no remembrancer, to show the men
 Who after came what was concealed beneath.

'The story-telling tribe, alone, outran
 All calculation far, and left behind,
 Lagging, the swiftest numbers Dreadful, even 320
 To fancy, was their never-ceasing birth ;
 And room had lacked, had not their life been short.
 Excepting some, their definition take

Thou thus, expressed in gentle phrase, which leaves
 Some truth behind: A Novel was a book
 Three-volumed, and once read, and oft cramm'd full
 Of poisonous error, blackening every page,
 And oftener still, of trifling, second-hand
 Remark, and old, diseased, putrid thought,
 And miserable incident, at war 330
 With nature, with itself and truth at war;
 Yet charming still the greedy reader on,
 Till done, he tried to recollect his thoughts,
 And nothing found, but dreaming emptiness.
 These, like ephemera, sprung, in a day,
 From lean and shallow-soiled brains of sand,
 And in a day expired; yet, while they lived,
 Tremendous oft-times was the popular roar;
 And cries of—Live for ever! struck the skies.

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One kind alone remained, seen through the gloom
 And sullen shadow of the past: as lights
 At intervals they shone, and brought the eye,
 That backward travelled, upward, till arrived
 At him, who, on the hills of Midian, sang
 The patient man of Uz; and from the lyre
 Of angels, learned the early dawn of Time.
 Not light and momentary labour these,
 But discipline and self-denial long,
 And purpose stanch, and perseverance, asked,
 And energy that inspiration seemed. 350
 Composed of many thoughts, possessing each
 Innate and underived vitality;
 Which, having fitly shaped, and well arranged
 In brotherly accord, they builded up;
 A stately superstructure, that, nor wind,
 Nor wave, nor shock of falling years, could move;
 Majestic and indissolubly firm;
 As ranks of veteran warriors in the field,
 Each by himself alone and singly seen,
 A tower of strength; in massy phalanx knit, 360
 And in embattled squadron rushing on,
 A sea of valour, dread, invincible.

Books of this sort, or sacred, or profane,
Which virtue helped, were titled, not amiss,
"The medicine of the mind:" who read them, read
Wisdom, and was refreshed; and on his path
Of pilgrimage, with healthier step advanced.

In mind, in matter, much was difficult
To understand. But, what in deepest night
Retired, inscrutable, mysterious, dark,— 370
Was evil, God's decrees, and deeds decreed,
Responsible: why God, the just and good,
Omnipotent and wise, should suffer sin
To rise: why man was free, accountable;
Yet God foreseeing, overruling all.
Where'er the eye could turn, whatever tract
Of moral thought it took, by reason's torch,
Or Scripture's led, before it still this mount
Sprung up, impervious, insurmountable,
Above the human stature rising far; 380
Horizon of the mind, surrounding still
The vision of the soul with clouds and gloom.
Yet did they oft attempt to scale its sides,
And gain its top. Philosophy, to climb,
With all her vigour, toiled from age to age;
From age to age, Theology, with all
Her vigour, toiled; and vagrant Fancy toiled.
Not weak and foolish only, but the wise,
Patient, courageous, stout, sound-headed man,
Of proper discipline, of excellent wind, 390
And strong of intellectual limb, toiled hard;
And oft above the reach of common eye
Ascended far, and seemed well nigh the top,
But only seemed; for still another top
Above them rose, till, giddy grown and mad,
With gazing at these dangerous heights of God,
They tumbled down, and in their raving said,
They o'er the summit saw. And some believed
Believed a lie; for never man on earth,
That mountain crossed, or saw its farther side. 400
Around it lay the wreck of many a Sage,

Divine, Philosopher ; and many more
 Fell daily, undeterred by millions fallen ;
 Each wondering why he failed to comprehend
 God, and with finite measure infinite.
 To pass it, was no doubt desirable ;
 And few of any intellectual size,
 That did not, sometime in their day, attempt ;
 But all in vain ; for as the distant hill,
 Which, on the right or left, the traveller's eye 410
 Bounds, seems advancing as he walks, and oft
 He looks, and looks, and thinks to pass ; but still
 It forward moves, and mocks his baffled sight,
 Till night descends, and wraps the scene in gloom ;
 So did this moral height the vision mock ;
 So lifted up its dark and cloudy head,
 Before the eye, and met it evermore ;
 And some, provoked, accused the righteous God.
 Accused of what ? hear human boldness now !
 Hear guilt, hear folly, madness, all extreme ! 420
 Accused of what ? the God of truth accused
 Of cruelty, injustice, wickedness.
 Abundant sin ! because a mortal man,
 A worm, at best, of small capacity,
 With scarce an atom of Jehovah's works
 Before him, and with scarce an hour to look
 Upon them, should presume to censure God,
 The infinite and uncreated God !
 To sit, in judgment, on Himself, his works,
 His providence ! and try, accuse, condemn ! 430
 If there is aught, thought or to think, absurd,
 Irrational and wicked, this is more,
 This most ; the sin of devils, or of those
 To devils growing fast. Wise men and good
 Accused themselves, not God ; and put their hands
 Upon their mouths, and in the dust adored.

The Christian's faith had many mysteries too ;
 The uncreated holy Three in One,
 Divine incarnate, human in divine ;
 The inward call ; the Sanctifying Dew 440

Coming unseen, unseen departing thence ;
 Anew creating all, and yet not heard ;
 Compelling, yet not felt. Mysterious these,
 Not that Jehovah to conceal them wished,
 Not that religion wished. The Christian faith,
 Unlike the timorous creeds of pagan priests,
 Was frank, stood forth to view, invited all
 To prove, examine, search, investigate,
 And gave herself a light to see her by.
 Mysterious these, because too large for eye 450
 Of man, too long for human arm to mete.

Go to yon mount, which on the north side stands
 Of New Jerusalem, and lifts its head
 Serene in glory bright, except the hill,
 The Sacred Hill of God, whereon no foot
 Must tread, highest of all creation's walks,
 And overlooking all, in prospect vast,
 From out the ethereal blue. That cliff ascend,
 Gaze thence, around thee look ; naught now impedes
 Thy view ; yet still thy vision, purified 460
 And strong although it be, a boundary meets ;
 Or rather, thou wilt say, thy vision fails
 To gaze throughout illimitable space,
 And find the end of infinite : and so
 It was with all the mysteries of faith.
 God set them forth unveiled to the full gaze
 Of man, and asked him to investigate ;
 But Reason's eye, however purified,
 And on whatever tall and goodly height
 Of observation placed, to comprehend 470
 Them fully, sought in vain : in vain seeks still ;
 But, wiser now and humbler, she concludes,
 From what she knows already of his love
 All gracious, that she cannot understand ;
 And gives him credit, reverence, praise for all.

Another feature in the ways of God,
 That wondrous seemed, and made some men complain,
 Was the unequal gift of worldly things.

Great was the difference, indeed, of men
Externally, from beggar to the prince. 480
The highest take and lowest, and conceive
The scale between. A noble of the earth,
One of its great, in splendid mansion dwelt;
Was robed in silk and gold; and every day
Fared sumptuously; was titled, honoured, served.
Thousands his nod awaited, and his will
For law received. Whole provinces his march
Attended, and his chariot drew, or on
Their shoulders bore aloft the precious man.
Millions, abased, fell prostrate at his feet: 490
And millions more thundered adoring praise.
As far as eye could reach, he called the land
His own, and added yearly to his fields.
Like tree that of the soil took healthy root,
He grew on every side, and towered on high,
And over half a nation, shadowing wide,
He spread his ample boughs. Air, earth, and sea,
Nature entire, the brute, and rational,
To please him ministered, and vied among
Themselves, who most should his desires prevent, 500
Watching the moving of his rising thoughts,
Attentively, and hasting to fulfil.
His palace rose and kissed the gorgeous clouds.
Streams bent their music to his will, trees sprung,
The native waste put on luxuriant robes;
And plains of happy cottages cast out
Their tenants, and became a hunting-field.
Before him bowed the distant isles, with fruits
And spices rare; the South her treasures brought,
The East and West sent; and the frigid North 510
Came with her offering of glossy furs.
Musicians soothed his ear with airs select;
Beauty held out her arms; and every man
Of cunning skill, and curious device,
And endless multitudes of liveried wights,
His pleasure waited with obsequious look.
And when the wants of nature were supplied,
And common-place extravagances filled,

Beyond their asking ; and caprice itself,
 In all its zig-zag appetites, gorged full, 520
 The man new wants and new expenses planned;
 Nor planned alone. Wise, learned, sober men,
 Of cogitation deep, took up his case,
 And planned for him new modes of folly wild ;
 Contrived new wishes, wants, and wondrous means
 Of spending with despatch ; yet, after all,
 His fields extended still, his riches grew,
 And what seemed splendour infinite, increased.
 So lavishly upon a single man
 Did Providence his bounties daily shower. 530

Turn now thy eye, and look on Poverty ;
 Look on the lowest of her ragged sons.
 We find him by the way, sitting in dust ;
 He has no bread to eat, no tongue to ask,
 No limbs to walk, no home, no house, no friend.
 Observe his goblin cheek, his wretched eye ;
 See how his hand, if any hand he has,
 Involuntary opens, and trembles forth,
 As comes the traveller's foot ; and hear his groan,
 His long and lamentable groan, announce 540
 The want that gnaws within. Severely now
 The sun scorches and burns his old bald head,
 The frost now glues him to the chilly earth.
 On him hail, rain, and tempest, rudely beat ;
 And all the winds of heaven, in jocular mood,
 Sport with his withered rags, that, tossed about,
 Display his nakedness to passers by,
 And grievously burlesque the human form.
 Observe him yet more narrowly. His limbs,
 With palsy shaken, about him, blasted lie ; 550
 And all his flesh is full of putrid sores
 And noisome wounds, his bones, of racking pains.
 Strange vesture this for an immortal soul !
 Strange retinue to wait a lord of earth !
 It seems as Nature, in some surly mood,
 After debate and musing long, had tried
 How vile and miserable thing her hand

Could fabricate, then made this meagre man.
 A sight so full of perfect misery,
 That passengers their faces turned away,
 And hasted to be gone; and delicate
 And tender women took another path.

510

This great disparity of outward things
 Taught many lessons; but this taught in chief,
 Though learned by few: That God no value set,
 That man should none, on goods of worldly kind
 On transitory, frail, external things,
 Of migratory, ever-changing sort:
 And further taught, that in the soul alone,
 The thinking, reasonable, willing soul,
 God placed the total excellence of man;
 And meant him evermore to seek it there.

570

But stranger still the distribution seemed
 Of intellect, though fewer here complained,
 Each with his share, upon the whole, content.
 One man there was—and many such you might
 Have met—who never had a dozen thoughts
 In all his life, and never changed their course;
 But told them o'er, each in its custom'd place,
 From morn till night, from youth to hoary age.
 Little above the ox that grazed the field,
 His reason rose; so weak his memory,
 The name his mother called him by, he scarce
 Remembered; and his judgment so untaught,
 That what at evening played along the swamp,
 Fantastic, clad in robe of fiery hue,
 He thought the devil in disguise, and fled
 With quivering heart and winged footsteps home.
 The word philosophy he never heard,
 Or science; never heard of liberty,
 Necessity, or laws of gravitation;
 And never had an unbelieving doubt.
 Beyond his native vale he never looked,
 But thought the visual line, that girt him round,
 The world's extreme; and thought the silver Moon,

580

590

That nightly o'er him led her virgin host,
 No broader than his father's shield. He lived,—
 Lived where his father lived, died where he died,
 Lived happy, and died happy, and was saved.
 Be not surprised. He loved and served his God. 600

There was another, large of understanding,
 Of memory infinite, of judgment deep,
 Who knew all learning, and all science knew ;
 And all phenomena, in heaven and earth,
 Traced to their causes ; traced the labyrinths
 Of thought, association, passion, will ;
 And all the subtle, nice affinities
 Of matter traced, its virtues, motions, laws ;
 And most familiarly and deeply talked
 Of mental, moral, natural, divine. 610
 Leaving the earth at will, he soared to heaven,
 And read the glorious visions of the skies ;
 And to the music of the rolling spheres
 Intelligently listened ; and gazed far back
 Into the awful depths of Deity ;
 Did all that mind assisted most could do ;
 And yet in misery lived, in misery died,
 Because he wanted holiness of heart.

A deeper lesson this to mortals taught,
 And nearer cut the branches of their pride, 620
 That not in mental, but in moral worth,
 God excellence placed ; and only to the good,
 To virtue, granted happiness, alone.

Admire the goodness of Almighty God !
 He riches gave, he intellectual strength,
 To few, and therefore none commands to be
 Or rich, or learned ; nor promises reward
 Of peace to these. On all, He moral worth
 Bestowed, and moral tribute asked from all.
 And who that could not pay ? who born so poor, 630
 Of intellect so mean, as not to know
 What seemed the best ; and, knowing, might not do ?

As not to know what God and conscience bade,
And what they bade not able to obey ?
And he, who acted thus, fulfilled the law
Eternal, and its promise reaped of peace ;
Found peace this way alone : who sought it else,
Sought mellow grapes beneath the icy Pole,
Sought blooming roses on the cheek of death,
Sought substance in a world of fleeting shades. 640

Take one example, to our purpose quite.
A man of rank, and of capacious soul,
Who riches had and fame, beyond desire,
An heir of flattery, to titles born,
And reputation and luxurious life :
Yet not content with ancestral name,
Or to be known because his fathers were,
He on this height hereditary stood,
And, gazing higher, purposed in his heart
To take another step. Above him seemed, 650
Alone, the mount of song, the lofty seat
Of canonized bards ; and thitherward,
By nature taught, and inward melody,
In prime of youth, he bent his eagle eye.
No cost was spared. What books he wished, he read ;
What sage to hear, he heard ; what scenes to see,
He saw. And first in rambling school-boy days
Britannia's mountain-walks, and heath-girt lakes,
And story-telling glens, and founts, and brooks,
And maids, as dew-drops pure and fair, his soul 660
With grandeur filled, and melody, and love.
Then travel came, and took him where he wished.
He cities saw, and courts, and princely pomp ;
And mused alone on ancient mountain-brows ;
And mused on battle-fields, where valour fought
In other days ; and mused on ruins grey
With years ; and drank from old and fabulous wells,
And plucked the vine that first-born prophets plucked ;
And mused on famous tombs, and on the wave
Of Ocean mused, and on the desert waste ; 670
The heavens and earth of every country saw.

Where'er the old inspiring Genii dwelt,
Aught that could rouse, expand, refine the soul,
Thither he went, and meditated there.

He touched his harp, and nations heard, entranced.
As some vast river of unfailing source,
Rapid, exhaustless, deep, his numbers flowed,
And opened new fountains in the human heart.
Where Fancy halted, weary in her flight,
In other men, his, fresh as morning, rose, 680
And soared untrodden heights, and seemed at home,
Where angels bashful looked. Others, though great,
Beneath their arguments seemed struggling whiles;
He, from above descending, stooped to touch
The loftiest thought; and proudly stooped, as though
It scarce deserved his verse. With Nature's self
He seemed an old acquaintance, free to jest
At will with all her glorious majesty.
He laid his hand upon "the Ocean's mane,"
And played familiar with his hoary locks; 690
Stood on the Alps, stood on the Apennines,
And with the thunder talked, as friend to friend;
And wove his garland of the lightning's wing,
In sportive twist—the lightning's fiery wing,
Which, as the footsteps of the dreadful God,
Marching upon the storm in vengeance, seemed;
Then turned, and with the grasshopper, who sung
His evening song beneath his feet, conversed.
Suns, moons, and stars, and clouds, his sisters were;
Rocks, mountains, meteors, seas, and winds, and storms,
His brothers, younger brothers, whom he scarce 700
As equals deemed. All passions of all men,
The wild and tame, the gentle and severe;
All thoughts, all maxims, sacred and profane;
All creeds, all seasons, Time, Eternity;
All that was hated, and all that was dear;
All that was hoped, all that was feared, by man;
He tossed about, as tempest, withered leaves;
Then, smiling, looked upon the wreck he made.
With terror now he froze the cowering blood, 710

And now dissolved the heart in tenderness,
 Yet would not tremble, would not weep himself;
 But back into his soul retired, alone,
 Dark, sullen, proud, gazing contemptuously
 On hearts and passions prostrate at his feet.
 So Ocean, from the plains his waves had late
 To desolation swept, retired in pride,
 Exulting in the glory of his might,
 And seemed to mock the ruin he had wrought.

As some fierce comet of tremendous size, 720
 To which the stars did reverence, as it passed,
 So he through learning and through fancy took
 His flight sublime, and on the loftiest top
 Of fame's dread mountain sat; not soiled and worn,
 As if he from the earth had laboured up;
 But as some bird of heavenly plumage fair,
 He looked, which down from higher regions came,
 And perched it there, to see what lay beneath.

The nations gazed, and wondered much, and praised.
 Critics before him fell in humble plight, 730
 Confounded fell, and made debasing signs
 To catch his eye, and stretched, and swelled themselves
 To bursting high, to utter bulky words
 Of admiration vast: and many, too,
 Many that aimed to imitate his flight,
 With weaker wing, unearthly fluttering made,
 And gave abundant sport to after days.

Great man! the nations gazed, and wondered much,
 And praised; and many called his evil good.
 Wits wrote in favour of his wickedness, 740
 And kings to do him honour took delight.
 Thus, full of titles, flattery, honour, fame,
 Beyond desire, beyond ambition, full,
 He died. He died of what? Of wretchedness;—
 Drank every cup of joy, heard every trump
 Of fame, drank early, deeply drank, drank draughts
 That common millions might have quenched; then died

Of thirst, because there was no more to drink.
 His goddess, Nature, wooed, embraced, enjoyed,
 Fell from his arms, abhorred ; his passions died, 750
 Died, all but dreary, solitary Pride ;
 And all his sympathies in being died.
 As some ill-guided bark, well built and tall,
 Which angry tides cast out on desert shore,
 And then, retiring, left it there to rot
 And moulder in the winds and rains of heaven ;
 So he, cut from the sympathies of life,
 And cast ashore from pleasure's boisterous surge,
 A wandering, weary, worn, and wretched thing,
 Scorched, and desolate, and blasted soul, 760
 A gloomy wilderness of dying thought,—
 Repined, and groaned, and withered from the earth.
 His groanings filled the land, his numbers filled ;
 And yet he seemed ashamed to groan :—Poor man !—
 Ashamed to ask, and yet he needed help.

Proof this, beyond all lingering of doubt,
 That not with natural or mental wealth,
 Was God delighted, or his peace secured ;
 That not in natural or mental wealth,
 Was human happiness or grandeur found. 770
 Attempt how monstrous, and how surely vain !
 With things of earthly sort, with aught but God,
 With aught but moral excellence, truth, and love,
 To satisfy and fill the immortal soul !
 Attempt, vain inconceivably ! attempt,
 To satisfy the Ocean with a drop,
 To marry Immortality to Death,
 And with the unsubstantial Shade of Time,
 To fill the embrace of all eternity ?

COURSE OF TIME.

Book V.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK V

In this Book the Bard sketches the "Joys of Time." Whether happiness or misery preponderated, and where happiness might be found, were subjects of debate among men. True happiness had no exclusive locality, but was within the reach of all. She always went in company with duty.

Among the numerous contributions to this happiness were the joys of childhood, the joys of maternal affection, the joys of youthful love, the joys of friendship. The study of nature, and contemplation of earth's scenery, also afforded their joys. Joys were felt in anticipations of the future ; in recollections of the past ; in repose after labour ; even in grief.

From these sources all men experienced joy ; but the pious man shared the highest degree.

And finally, in earth's history, there came a period when general joy pervaded it. This was the "thousand years" of Messiah's reign, foretold by the prophets, preceded by a terrible contest between the opposing powers of Truth and Error.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book V.

PRAISE God, ye servants of the Lord ! praise God,
Ye angels strong ! praise God, ye sons of men !
Praise him who made, and who redeemed your souls,
Who gave you hope, reflection, reason, will ;
Minds that can pierce eternity remote,
And live at once on future, present, past ;
Can speculate on systems yet to make,
And back recoil on ancient days of Time,
Of Time, soon past, soon lost among the shades
Of buried years. Not so the actions done 10
In Time, the deeds of reasonable men.
As if engraven with pen of iron grain,
And laid in flinty rock, they stand, unchanged,
Written on the various pages of the past :
If good, in rosy characters of love ;
If bad, in letters of vindictive fire.

God may forgive, but cannot blot them out.
Systems begin and end, Eternity
Rolls on his endless years, and men, absolved
By mercy from the consequence, forget 20
The evil deed, and God imputes it not ;
But neither systems ending nor begun,

Eternity that rolls his endless years,
 Nor men absolved, and sanctified, and washed
 By mercy from the consequence, nor yet
 Forgetfulness, nor God imputing not,
 Can wash the guilty deed, once done, from out
 The faithful annals of the past: who reads,
 And many read, there finds it, as it was,
 And is, and shall for ever be,—a dark,
 Unnatural, and loathly moral spot. 30

The span of Time was short, indeed; and now
 Three-fourths were past, the last begun, and on
 Careering to its close, which soon we sing.
 But first our promise we redeem, to tell
 The joys of Time, her joys of native growth;
 And briefly must, what longer tale deserves.

Wake, dear remembrances! wake, childhood-days!
 Loves, friendships, wake! and wake, thou morn and
 even!
 Sun! with thy orient locks; night, moon, and stars '40
 And thou, celestial bow! and all ye woods,
 And hills, and vales, first trod in dawning life,
 And hours of holy musing, wake! wake, earth!
 And, smiling to remembrance, come, and bring,
 For thou canst bring, meet argument for song
 Of heavenly harp, meet hearing for the ear
 Of heavenly auditor, exalted high.

God gave much peace on earth, much holy joy;
 Oped fountains of perennial spring, whence flowed
 Abundant happiness to all who wished 50
 To drink; not perfect bliss;—that dwells with us,
 Beneath the eyelids of the Eternal One,
 And sits at his right hand alone;—but such
 As well deserved the name, abundant joy;
 Pleasures, on which the memory of saints
 Of highest glory, still delights to dwell.

It was, we own, subject of much debate,
 And worthy men stood on opposing sides,

Whether the cup of mortal life had more
 Of sour or sweet. Vain question this, when asked 60
 In general terms, and worthy to be left
 Unsolved. If most was sour, the drinker, not
 The cup, we blame. Each in himself the means
 Possessed to turn the bitter sweet, the sweet
 To bitter. Hence, from out the self-same fount,
 One nectar drank, another draughts of gall.
 Hence, from the self-same quarter of the sky,
 One saw ten thousand angels look and smile ;
 Another saw as many demons frown.
 One discord heard, where harmony inclined 70
 Another's ear. The sweet was in the taste,
 The beauty in the eye, and in the ear
 The melody ; and in the man,—for God
 Necessity of sinning laid on none,—
 'To form the taste, to purify the eye,
 And tune the ear, that all he tasted, saw,
 Or heard, might be harmonious, sweet, and fair.
 Who would, might groan ; who would, might sing for
 joy.

Nature lamented little. Undevoured
 By spurious appetites, she found enough, 80
 Where least was found ; with gleanings satisfied,
 Or crumbs, that from the hand of luxury fell ;
 Yet seldom these she ate, but ate the bread
 Of her own industry, made sweet by toil ;
 And walked in robes that her own hand had spun ;
 And slept on down her early rising bought.
 Frugal and diligent in business, chaste
 And abstinent, she stored for helpless age,
 And, keeping in reserve her spring-day health,
 And dawning relishes of life, she drank 90
 Her evening cup with excellent appetite ;
 And saw her eldest sun decline, as fair
 As rose her earliest morn, and pleased as well.

Whether in crowds or solitudes, in streets
 Or shady groves, dwelt Happiness, it seems

In vain to ask; her nature makes it vain;
 Though poets much, and hermits talked, and sung
 Of brooks, and crystal founts, and weeping dews,
 And myrtle bowers, and solitary vales,
 And with the nymph made assignations there, 100
 And wooed her with the love-sick oaten reed;
 And sages too, although less positive,
 Advised their sons to court her in the shade.
 Delirious babble all! Was happiness,
 Was self-approving, God-approving joy,
 In drops of dew, however pure? in gales,
 However sweet? in wells, however clear?
 Or groves, however thick with verdant shade?

True, these were of themselves exceeding fair:
 How fair at morn and even! worthy the walk 110
 Of loftiest mind, and gave, when all within
 Was right, a feast of overflowing bliss;
 But were the occasion, not the cause of joy.
 They waked the native fountains of the soul,
 Which slept before; and stirred the holy tides
 Of feeling up, giving the heart to drink
 From its own treasures draughts of perfect sweet.

The Christian faith, which better knew the heart
 Of man, him thither sent for peace, and thus
 Declared: Who finds it, let him find it there; 120
 Who finds it not, for ever let him seek
 In vain; 'tis God's most holy, changeless will.

True Happiness had no localities,
 No tones provincial, no peculiar garb.
 Where Duty went, she went, with Justice went,
 And went with Meekness, Charity, and Love.
 Where'er a tear was dried, a wounded heart
 Bound up, a bruised spirit with the dew
 Of sympathy anointed, or a pang
 Of honest suffering soothed, or injury 130
 Repeated oft, as oft by love forgiven;
 Where'er an evil passion was subdued,

Or Virtue's feeble embers fanned ; where'er
 A sin was heartily abjured, and left ;
 Where'er a pious act was done, or breathed
 A pious prayer, or wished a pious wish ;
 There was a high and holy place, a spot
 Of sacred light, a most religious fane,
 Where Happiness, descending, sat and smiled.

But these apart, in sacred memory lives 140
 The morn of life, first morn of endless days,
 Most joyful morn ! nor yet for nought the joy.
 A being of eternal date commenced,
 A young immortal then was born ! and who
 Shall tell what strange variety of bliss
 Burst on the infant soul, when first it looked
 Abroad on God's creation fair, and saw
 The glorious earth and glorious heaven, and face
 Of man sublime, and saw all new, and felt [150
 All new ! when thought awoke, thought never more
 To sleep ! when first it saw, heard, reasoned, willed,
 And triumphed in the warmth of conscious life !

Nor happy only, but the cause of joy,
 Which those who never tasted always mourned.
 What tongue !—no tongue shall tell what bliss o'erflowed
 The mother's tender heart, while round her hung
 The offspring of her love, and lisped her name,
 As living jewels dropped unstained from heaven,
 That made her fairer far, and sweeter seem,
 Than every ornament of costliest hue ! 160
 And who hath not been ravished, as she passed
 With all her playful band of little ones,
 Like Luna, with her daughters of the sky,
 Walking in matron majesty and grace ?
 All who had hearts here pleasure found : and oft
 Have I, when tired with heavy task,—for tasks
 Were heavy in the world below,—relaxed
 My weary thoughts among their guiltless sports,
 And led them by their little hands a-field, [170
 And watched them run and crop the tempting flower,—

Which oft, unasked, they brought me, and bestowed
 With smiling face, that waited for a look
 Of praise,—and answered curious questions, put
 In much simplicity, but ill to solve;
 And heard their observations strange and new,
 And settled whiles their little quarrels, soon
 Ending in peace, and soon forgot in love.
 And still I looked upon their loveliness,
 And sought through nature for similitudes
 Of perfect beauty, innocence, and bliss, 180
 And fairest imagery around me thronged;
 Dew-drops at day-spring on a seraph's locks,
 Roses that bathe about the well of life,
 Young Loves, young Hopes, dancing on Morning's
 cheek,
 Gems leaping in the coronet of Love!
 So beautiful, so full of life, they seemed
 As made entire of beams of angels' eyes.
 Gay, guileless, sportive, lovely, little things!
 Playing around the den of Sorrow, clad
 In smiles, believing in their fairy hopes, 190
 And thinking man and woman true! all joy,
 Happy all day, and happy all the night!

Hail, holy Love! thou word that sums all bliss,
 Gives and receives all bliss, fullest when most
 Thou givest! spring-head of all felicity,
 Deepest when most is drawn! emblem of God!
 O'erflowing most when greatest numbers drink!
 Essence that binds the uncreated Three,
 Chain that unites creation to its Lord,
 Centre to which all being grav'tates, 200
 Eternal, ever-growing, happy Love!
 Enduring all, hoping, forgiving all;
 Instead of law, fulfilling every law;
 Entirely blest, because thou seekst no more.
 Hopest not, nor fearest; but on the present livest,
 And holdst perfection smiling in thy arms.
 Mysterious, infinite, exhaustless Love!
 On earth mysterious, and mysterious still

In heaven ! sweet chord, that harmonizes all
 The harps of Paradise ! the spring, the well, 210
 That fills the bowl and banquet of the sky !

But why should I to thee of Love divine ?
 Who happy, and not eloquent of Love ?
 Who holy, and, as thou art, pure, and not
 A temple where her glory ever dwells,
 Where burn her fires, and beams her perfect eye ?

Kindred to this, part of this holy flame,
 Was youthful love—the sweetest boon of Earth.
 Hail, Love ! first Love, thou word that sums all bliss '
 The sparkling cream of all Time's blessedness, 220
 The silken down of happiness complete !
 Discerner of the ripest grapes of joy,
 She gathered, and selected with her hand,
 All finest relishes, all fairest sights,
 All rarest odours, all divinest sounds,
 All thoughts, all feelings dearest to the soul ;
 And brought the holy mixture home, and filled
 The heart with all superlatives of bliss !
 But, who would that expound, which words transcends,
 Must talk in vain. Behold a meeting scene 230
 Of early love, and thence infer its worth.

It was an eve of Autumn's holiest mood.
 The corn fields, bathed in Cynthia's silver light,
 Stood ready for the reaper's gathering hand ;
 And all the Winds slept soundly. Nature seemed,
 In silent contemplation, to adore
 Its Maker. Now and then, the aged leaf
 Fell from its fellows, rustling to the ground ;
 And, as it fell, bade man think on his end.
 On vale and lake, on wood and mountain high, 240
 With pensive wing outspread, sat heavenly Thought,
 Conversing with itself. Vesper looked forth,
 From out her western hermitage, and smiled ;
 And up the east, unclouded, rode the Moon
 With all her Stars, gazing on earth intense,
 As if she saw some wonder walking there.

Such was the night, so lovely, still, serene,
 When, by a hermit thorn that on the hill
 Had seen a hundred flowery ages pass,
 A damsel kneeled to offer up her prayer, 250
 Her prayer nightly offered, nightly heard.
 This ancient thorn had been the meeting place
 Of love, before his country's voice had called
 The ardent youth to fields of honour far
 Beyond the wave : and hither now repaired,
 Nightly, the maid, by God's all-seeing eye
 Seen only, while she sought this boon alone,
 " Her lover's safety, and his quick return."
 In holy, humble attitude she kneeled,
 And to her bosom, fair as moonbeam, pressed 260
 One hand, the other lifted up to heaven.
 Her eye, upturned, bright as the star of morn,
 As violet meek, excessive ardour streamed,
 Wafting away her earnest heart to God.
 Her voice, scarce uttered, soft as Zephyr sighs
 On morning lily's cheek, though soft and low,
 Yet heard in heaven, heard at the mercy-seat.
 A tear-drop wandered on her lovely face ;
 It was a tear of faith and holy fear,
 Pure as the drops that hang at dawning-time, 270
 On yonder willows by the stream of life.
 On her the Moon looked steadfastly ; the Stars,
 That circle nightly round the eternal Throne,
 Glanced down, well pleased ; and Everlasting Love
 Gave gracious audience to her prayer sincere.

Oh, had her lover seen her thus alone,
 Thus holy, wrestling thus, and all for him !
 Nor did he not : for oft-times Providence,
 With unexpected joy the fervent prayer
 Of faith surprised. Returned from long delay, 280
 With glory crowned of righteous actions won,
 The sacred thorn, to memory dear, first sought
 The youth, and found it at the happy hour,
 Just when the damsel kneeled herself to pray.
 Wrapped in devotion, pleading with her God

She saw him not, heard not his foot approach.
 All hoiy images seemed too impure
 To emblem her he saw. A seraph kneeled,
 Beseeching for his ward, before the Throne,
 Seemed fittest, pleased him best. Sweet was the
 thought ! 290

But sweeter still the kind remembrance came,
 That she was flesh and blood, formed for himself,
 The plighted partner of his future life.
 And as they met, embraced, and sat, embowered,
 In woody chambers of the starry night,
 Spirits of love about them ministered,
 And God, approving, blessed the holy joy !

Nor unremembered is the hour when friends
 Met. Friends, but few on earth, and therefore dear
 Sought oft, and sought almost as oft in vain ; 300
 Yet always sought, so native to the heart,
 So much desired, and coveted by all.
 Nor wonder thou,—thou wonderest not nor needst.
 Much beautiful, and excellent, and fair,
 Was seen beneath the sun ; but naught was seen
 More beautiful, or excellent, or fair,
 Than face of faithful friend, fairest when seen
 In darkest day : and many sounds were sweet,
 Most ravishing, and pleasant to the ear ;
 But sweeter none than voice of faithful friend, 310
 Sweet always, sweetest, heard in loudest storm
 Some I remember, and will ne'er forget ;
 My early friends, friends of my evil day ;
 Friends in my mirth, friends in my misery too ;
 Friends given by God in mercy and in love ;
 My counsellors, my comforters, and guides ;
 My joy in grief, my second bliss in joy ;
 Companions of my young desires ; in doubt,
 My oracles, my wings in high pursuit.
 Oh, I remember, and will ne'er forget, 320
 Our meeting spots, our chosen, sacred hours,
 Our burning words that uttered all the soul,
 Our faces beaming with unearthly love ;

Sorrow with sorrow sighing, hope with hope
 Exulting, heart embracing heart entire.
 As birds of social feather helping each
 His fellow's flight, we soared into the skies,
 And cast the clouds beneath our feet, and Earth
 With all her tardy, leaden-footed Cares,
 And talked the speech and ate the food of heaven ! 330
 These I remember, these selectest men,
 And would their names record ; but what avails
 My mention of their name ? Before the Throne
 They stand illustrious 'mong the loudest harps,
 And will receive thee glad, my friend and theirs.
 For all are friends in heaven, all faithful friends !
 And many friendships, in the days of Time
 Begun, are lasting here, and growing still ;
 So grows ours evermore, both theirs and mine.

Nor is the hour of lonely walk forgot, 340
 In the wide desert, where the view was large.
 Pleasant were many scenes, but most to me
 The solitude of vast extent, untouched
 By hand of art, where Nature sowed, herself,
 And reaped her crops ; whose garments were the
 clouds,
 Whose minstrels, brooks ; whose lamps, the moon and
 stars ;
 Whose organ-choir, the voice of many waters ;
 Whose banquets, morning dews ; whose heroes, storms ;
 Whose warriors, mighty winds ; whose lovers, flowers.
 Whose orators, the thunderbolts of God ; 350
 Whose palaces, the everlasting hills ;
 Whose ceiling, heaven's unfathomable blue ;
 And from whose rocky turrets, battled high,
 Prospect immense spread out on all sides round,
 Lost now between the welkin and the main,
 Now walled with hills that slept above the storm.

Most fit was such a place for musing men,
 Happiest sometimes when musing without aim.
 It was, indeed, a wondrous sort of bliss

The lonely bard enjoyed, when forth he walked, 360
 Unpurposed ; stood, and knew not why ; sat down,
 And knew not where ; arose, and knew not when ;
 Had eyes, and saw not ; ears, and nothing heard ;
 And sought—sought neither heaven nor earth—sought
 naught,

Nor meant to think ; but ran, meantime, through vast
 Of visionary things, fairer than aught
 That was ; and saw the distant tops of thoughts,
 Which men of common stature never saw,
 Greater than aught that largest words could hold,
 Or give idea of, to those who read. 370

He entered in to Nature's holy place,
 Her inner chamber, and beheld her face
 Unveiled ; and heard unutterable things,
 And incommunicable visions saw ;
 Things then unutterable, and visions then
 Of incommunicable glory bright ;
 But by the lips of after ages formed
 To words, or by their pencil pictured forth ;
 Who, entering farther in, beheld again,
 And heard unspeakable and marvellous things, 380
 Which other ages in their turn revealed,
 And left to others, greater wonders still.

The earth abounded much in silent wastes ;
 Nor yet is heaven without its solitudes,
 Else incomplete in bliss, whither who will
 May oft retire, and meditate alone,
 Of God, redemption, holiness, and love ;
 Nor needs to fear a setting sun, or haste
 Him home from rainy tempest unforeseen,
 Or, sighing, leave his thoughts for want of time. 390

But whatsoever was both good and fair,
 And highest relish of enjoyment gave,
 In intellectual exercise was found,
 When, gazing through the future, present, past,
 Inspired, thought linked to thought, harmonious flowed
 In poetry—the loftiest mood of mind ;

Or when philosophy the reason led
Deep through the outward circumstance of things,
And saw the master-wheels of Nature move;
And travelled far along the endless line 400
Of certain and of probable; and made,
At every step, some new discovery,
That gave the soul sweet sense of larger room.
High these pursuits, and sooner to be named,
Deserved; at present, only named, again
To be resumed, and praised in longer verse.

Abundant and diversified above
All number, were the sources of delight;
As infinite as were the lips that drank;
And to the pure, all innocent and pure; 410
The simplest still to wisest men the best.
One made acquaintanceship with plants and flowers,
And happy grew in telling all their names;
One classed the quadrupeds; a third, the fowls;
Another found in minerals his joy:
And I have seen a man, a worthy man,
In happy mood conversing with a fly;
And as he, through his glass, made by himself,
Beheld its wondrous eye and plumage fine,
From leaping scarce he kept, for perfect joy. 420

And from my path I with my friend have turned,
A man of excellent mind and excellent heart,
And climbed the neighbouring hill, with arduous step,
Fetching from distant cairn, or from the earth
Digging, with labour sure, the ponderous stone,
Which, having carried to the highest top,
We downward rolled; and as it strove, at first,
With obstacles that seemed to match its force,
With feeble, crooked motion to and fro
Wavering, he looked with interest most intense, 430
And prayed almost; and as it gathered strength,
And straightened the current of its furious flow,
Exulting in the swiftness of its course,
And, rising now with rainbow-bound immense,

Leaped down careering o'er the subject plain,
 He clapped his hands in sign of boundless bliss,
 And laughed and talked, well paid for all his toil :
 And when at night the story was rehearsed,
 Uncommon glory kindled in his eye.

[410

And there were, too,—Harp ! lift thy voice on high,
 And run in rapid numbers o'er the face
 Of Nature's scenery,—and there were day
 And night, and rising suns and setting suns,
 And clouds that seemed like chariots of saints,
 By fiery coursers drawn, as brightly hued
 As if the glorious, bushy, golden locks
 Of thousand cherubim had been shorn off,
 And on the temples hung of Morn and Even.
 And there were moons, and stars, and darkness streaked
 With light; and voice and tempest heard secure, 450
 And there were seasons coming evermore,
 And going still, all fair, and always new,
 With bloom, and fruit, and fields of hoary grain.
 And there were hills of flock, and groves of song,
 And flowery streams, and garden walks embowered,
 Where, side by side, the rose and lily bloomed ;
 And sacred founts, wild harps, and moonlight glens.
 And forests vast, fair lawns, and lonely oaks,
 And little willows sipping at the brook ;
 Old wizard haunts, and dancing seats of mirth; 460
 Gay festive bowers, and palaces in dust ;
 Dark owlet nooks, and caves, and battled rocks ;
 And winding valleys, roofed with pendent shade ;
 And tall and perilous cliffs, that overlooked
 The breadth of Ocean, sleeping on his waves,
 Sounds, sights, smells, tastes, the heaven and earth,
 profuse
 In endless sweets, above all praise of song :
 For not to use alone did Providence
 Abound ; but large example gave to man
 Of grace, and ornament, and splendour rich, 470
 Suited abundantly to every taste,
 In bird, beast, fish, winged and creeping thing,

In herb, and flower, and in the restless change,
Which, on the many-colored seasons, made
The annual circuit of the fruitful earth.

Nor do I aught of earthly sort remember,—
If partial feeling to my native place
Lead not my lyre astray,—of fairer view,
And comelier walk, than the blue mountain-paths,
And snowy cliffs of Albion renowned ; 480
Albion, an isle long blessed with gracious laws,
And gracious kings, and favoured much of Heaven,
Though yielding oft penurious gratitude.
Nor do I of that isle remember aught
Of prospect more sublime and beautiful,
Than Scotia's northern battlement of hills,
Which first I from my father's house beheld,
At dawn of life ; beloved in memory still,
And standard still of rural imagery.
What most resembles them, the fairest seems, 490
And stirs the eldest sentiments of bliss ;
And, pictured on the tablet of my heart,
Their distant shapes eternally remain,
And in my dreams their cloudy tops arise.

Much of my native scenery appears,
And presses forward to be in my song ;
But must not now, for much behind awaits
Of higher note. Four trees I pass not by,
Which o'er our house their evening shadow threw—
Three ash, and one of elm. Tall trees they were, 500
And old, and had been old a century
Before my day. None living could say aught
About their youth ; but they were goodly trees
And oft I wondered,—as I sat and thought
Beneath their summer shade, or, in the night
Of winter, heard the spirits of the wind
Growling among their boughs,—how they had grown
So high, in such a rough, tempestuous place ;
And when a hapless branch, torn by the blast,
Fell down, I mourned, as if a friend had fallen. 510

These I distinctly hold in memory still,
And all the desert scenery around.
Nor strange, that recollection there should dwell,
Where first I heard of God's redeeming love ;
First felt and reasoned, loved and was beloved ;
And first awoke the harp to holy song.

To hoar and green there was enough of joy.
Hopes, friendships, charities, and warm pursuit,
Gave comfortable flow to youthful blood.
And there were old remembrances of days, 520
When, on the glittering dews of orient life,
Shone sunshine hopes, unfailed, unperjured, then ;
And there were childish sports, and school-boy feats,
And school-boy spots, and earnest vows of love,
Uttered, when passion's boisterous tide ran high,
Sincerely uttered, though but seldom kept :
And there were angel looks, and sacred hours
Of rapture, hours that in a moment passed,
And yet were wished to last forevermore ;
And venturous exploits, and hardy deeds, 530
And bargains shrewd, achieved in manhood's prime ;
And thousand recollections, gay and sweet,
Which, as the old and venerable man
Approached the grave, around him, smiling, flocked,
And breathed new ardour through his ebbing veins,
And touched his lips with endless eloquence,
And cheered and much refreshed his withered heart.

Indeed, each thing remembered, all but guilt,
Was pleasant, and a constant source of joy.
Nor lived the old on memory alone. 540
He in his children lived a second life,
With them again took root, sprang with their hopes,
Entered into their schemes, partook their fears,
Laughed in their mirth, and in their gain grew rich.
And sometimes on the eldest cheek was seen
A smile as hearty as on face of youth,
That saw in prospect sunny hopes invite,
Hope's pleasures, sung to harp of sweetest note,

Harp, heard with rapture on Britannia's hills,
With rapture heard by me, in morn of life.

55ⁿ

Nor small the joy of rest to mortal men,
Rest after labour, sleep approaching soft,
And wrapping all the weary faculties
In sweet repose. Then Fancy, unrestrained
By sense or judgment, strange confusion made
Of future, present, past, combining things
Unseemly, things unsociable in nature,
In most absurd communion, laughable,
Though sometimes vexing sore the slumbering soul.
Sporting at will, she, through her airy halls, 560
With moonbeams paved, and canopied with stars,
And tapestried with marvellous imagery,
And shapes of glory, infinitely fair,
Moving and mixing in most wondrous dance,—
Fantastically walked, but pleased so well,
That ill she liked the judgment's voice severe,
Which called her home when noisy morn awoke.
And oft she sprang beyond the bounds of Time,
On her swift pinion lifting up the souls
Of righteous men, on high to God and heaven, 570
Where they beheld unutterable things;
And heard the glorious music of the blessed,
Circling the throne of the Eternal Three;
And, with the spirits unincarnate, took
Celestial pastime, on the hills of God,
Forgetful of the gloomy pass between.

Some dreams were useless, moved by turbid course
Of animal disorder ; not so all.
Deep moral lessons some impressed, that naught
Could afterwards deface : and oft in dreams, 580
The master passion of the soul displayed
His huge deformity, concealed by day,
Warning the sleeper to beware, awake :
And oft in dreams, the reprobate and vile,
Unpardonable sinner,—as he seemed
Toppling upon the perilous edge of hell,—

In dreadful apparition, saw, before
 His vision pass, the shadows of the damned ;
 And saw the glare of hollow, cursed eyes
 Spring from the skirts of the infernal night ; 590
 And saw the souls of wicked men, new dead,
 By devils hearsed into the fiery gulf ;
 And heard the burning of the endless flames ;
 And heard the weltering of the waves of wrath ;
 And sometimes, too, before his fancy, passed
 The Worm that never dies, writhing its folds
 In hideous sort, and with eternal Death
 Held horrid colloquy, giving the wretch
 Unwelcome earnest of the wo to come.
 But these we leave, as unbefitting song, 600
 That promised happy narrative of joy.

But what, of all the joys of earth, was most
 Of native growth, most proper to the soil,
 Not elsewhere known, in worlds that never fell,
 Was joy that sprung from disappointed wo.
 The joy in grief, the pleasure after pain,
 Fears turned to hopes, meetings expected not,
 Deliverances from dangerous attitudes,
 Better for worse, and best sometimes for worst,
 And all the seeming ill ending in good,— 610
 A sort of happiness composed, which none
 Has had experience of, but mortal man ;
 Yet not to be despised. Look back, and one
 Behold, who would not give her tear for all
 The smiles that dance about the cheek of Mirth.

Among the tombs she walks at noon of night,
 In miserable garb of widowhood.
 Observe her yonder, sickly, pale, and sad,
 Bending her wasted body o'er the grave
 Of him who was the husband of her youth. 620
 The moonbeams, trembling through these ancient yews,
 That stand like ranks of mourners round the bed
 Of death, fall dismally upon her face,
 Her little, hollow, withered face, almost

Invisible, so worn away with wo.
 The tread of hasty foot, passing so late,
 Disturbs her not; nor yet the roar of mirth,
 From neighbouring revelry ascending loud.
 She hears sees naught, fears naught. One thought
 alone

Fills all her heart and soul, half hoping, half 630
 Remembering, sad, unutterable thought!
 Uttered by silence and by tears alone.

Sweet tears! the awful language, eloquent
 Of infinite affection, far too big
 For words. She sheds not many now. That grass,
 Which springs so rankly o'er the dead, has drunk
 Already many showers of grief; a drop
 Or two are all that now remain behind,
 And, from her eye that darts strange fiery beams,
 At dreary intervals, drip down her cheek, 640
 Falling most mournfully from bone to bone.

But yet she wants not tears. That babe, that hangs
 Upon her breast, that babe that never saw
 Its father—he was dead before its birth—
 Helps her to weep, weeping before its time,
 Taught sorrow by the mother's melting voice,
 Repeating oft the father's sacred name.
 Be not surprised at this expense of wo!
 The man she mourns was all she called her own,
 The music of her ear, light of her eye, 650

Desire of all her heart, her hope, her fear,
 The element in which her passions lived,
 Dead now, or dying all: nor long shall she
 Visit that place of skulls. Night after night,
 She wears herself away. The moonbeam, now,
 That falls upon her unsubstantial frame,
 Scarce finds obstruction; and upon her bones,
 Barren as leafless boughs in winter-time,
 Her infant fastens his little hands, as oft,
 Forgetful, she leaves him a while unheld. 660
 But, look, she passes not away in gloom.
 A light from far illumines her face, a light
 That comes beyond the moon beyond the sun —

The light of truth divine, the glorious hope
Of resurrection at the promised morn,
And meetings then which ne'er shall part again.

Indulge another note of kindred tone,
Where grief was mixed with melancholy joy.

Our sighs were numerous, and profuse our tears,
For she, we lost, was lovely, and we loved 670
Her much. Fresh in our memory, as fresh
As yesterday, is yet the day she died.
It was an April day; and blithely all
The youth of nature leaped beneath the sun,
And promised glorious manhood; and our hearts
Were glad, and round them danced the lightsome blood,
In healthy merriment, when tidings came,
A child was born: and tidings came again,
That she who gave it birth was sick to death.
So swift trode sorrow on the heels of joy! 680
We gathered round her bed, and bent our knees
In fervant supplication to the Throne
Of Mercy, and perfumed our prayers with sighs
Sincere, and penitential tears, and looks
Of self-abasement; but we sought to stay
An angel on the earth, a spirit ripe
For heaven; and Mercy, in her love, refused,
Most merciful, as oft, when seeming least!
Most gracious when she seemed the most to frown!
The room I well remember, and the bed 690
On which she lay, and all the faces too,
That crowded dark and mournfully around.
Her father there and mother, bending, stood;
And down their aged cheeks fell many drops
Of bitterness. Her husband, too, was there,
And brothers, and they wept; her sisters, too,
Did weep and sorrow, comfortless; and I,
Too, wept, though not to weeping given; and all
Within the house was dolorous and sad.
This I remember well; but better still, 700
I do remember, and will ne'er forget,

The dying eye! That eye alone was bright,
 And brighter grew, as nearer death approached;
 As I have seen the gentle little flower
 Look fairest in the silver beam which fell,
 Reflected from the thunder-cloud that soon
 Came down, and o'er the desert scattered far
 And wide its loveliness. She made a sign
 To bring her babe—'twas brought, and by her placed.
 She looked upon its face, that neither smiled 710
 Nor wept, nor knew who gazed upon't; and laid
 Her hand upon its little breast, and sought
 For it, with look that seemed to penetrate
 The heavens, unutterable blessings, such
 As God to dying parents only granted,
 For infants left behind them in the world.
 "God keep my child!" we heard her say, and heard
 No more. The Angel of the Covenant
 Was come, and, faithful to his promise, stood, [720
 Prepared to walk with her through death's dark vale.
 And now her eyes grew bright, and brighter still,
 Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
 With many tears, and closed without a cloud.
 They set as sets the morning star, which goes
 Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
 Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
 But melts away into the light of heaven.

Loves, friendships, hopes, and dear remembrances,
 The kind embracings of the heart, and hours
 Of happy thought, and smiles coming to tears, 730
 And glories of the heaven and starry cope
 Above, and glories of the earth beneath,—
 These were the rays that wandered through the gloom
 Of mortal life; wells of the wilderness,
 Redeeming features in the face of Time,
 Sweet drops, that made the mixed cup of Earth
 A palatable draught—too bitter else.

About the joys and pleasures of the world,
 This question was not seldom in debate:
 Whether the righteous man, or sinner, had 740

The greatest share, and relished them the most?
 Truth gives the answer thus, gives it distinct,
 Nor needs to reason long: The righteous man.
 For what was he denied of earthly growth,
 Worthy the name of good? Truth answers, Naught.
 Had he not appetites, and sense, and will?
 Might he not eat, if Providence allowed,
 The finest of the wheat? Might he not drink
 The choicest wine? True, he was temperate;
 But, then, was temperance a foe to peace? 750
 Might he not rise, and clothe himself in gold?
 Ascend, and stand in palaces of kings?
 True, he was honest still, and charitable:
 Were, then, these virtues foes to human peace?
 Might he not do exploits, and gain a name?
 Most true, he trode not down a fellow's right,
 Nor walked up to a throne on skulls of men:
 Were justice, then, and mercy, foes to peace?
 Had he not friendships, loves, and smiles, and hopes?
 Sat not around his table sons and daughters? 760
 Was not his ear with music pleased? his eye
 With light? his nostrils with perfumes? his lips
 With pleasant relishes? Grew not his herds?
 Fell not the rain upon his meadows? reaped
 He not his harvests? and did not his heart
 Revel, at will, through all the charities
 And sympathies of nature, unconfined?
 And were not these all sweetened and sanctified
 By dews of holiness, shed from above?
 Might he not walk through Fancy's airy halls? 770
 Might he not History's ample page survey?
 Might he not, finally, explore the depths
 Of mental, moral, natural, divine?
 But why enumerate thus? One word enough.
 There was no joy in all created things,
 No drop of sweet, that turned not in the end
 To sour, of which the righteous man did not
 Partake; partake, invited by the voice
 Of God, his Father's voice, who gave him all
 His heart's desire: and o'er the sinner still, 780

The Christian had this one advantage more,
 That when his earthly pleasures failed,—and fail
 They always did to every soul of man,—
 He sent his hopes on high, looked up and reached
 His sickle forth, and reaped the fields of heaven,
 And plucked the clusters from the vines of God.

Nor was the general aspect of the world
 Always a moral waste. A time there came,
 Though few believed it e'er should come; a time,
 Typed by the Sabbath day recurring once 790
 In seven, and by the year of rest indulged
 Septennial to the lands on Jordan's banks;
 A time foretold by Judah's bards in words
 Of fire; a time, seventh part of time, and set
 Before the eighth and last, the Sabbath day
 Of all the earth, when all had rest and peace.
 Before its coming many to and fro
 Ran, ran from various cause; by many sent
 From various cause, upright and crooked both.
 Some sent and ran for love of souls, sincere; 800
 And more, at instance of a holy name.
 With godly zeal much vanity was mixed;
 And circumstance of gaudy civil pomp;
 And speeches buying praise for praise; and lists,
 And endless scrolls, surcharged with modest names
 That sought the public eye; and stories, told
 In quackish phrase, that hurt their credit, even
 When true; combined with wise and prudent means,
 Much wheat, much chaff, much gold, and much alloy;
 But God wrought with the whole, wrought most with
 what 810
 To man seemed weakest means, and brought result
 Of good, from good and evil both; and breathed
 Into the withered nations breath and life,
 The breath and life of liberty and truth,
 By means of knowledge, breathed into the soul.

Then was the evil day of tyranny,
 Of kingly and of priestly tyranny.

That bruised the nations long. As yet, no state
 Beneath the heavens had tasted freedom's wine,
 Though loud of freedom was the talk of all. 820
 Some groaned more deeply, being heavier tasked;
 Some wrought with straw, and some without; but all
 Were slaves, or meant to be; for rulers, still,
 Had been of equal mind, excepting few,
 Cruel, rapacious, tyrannous, and vile,
 And had with equal shoulder propped the Beast.
 As yet, the Church, the holy spouse of God,
 In members few, had wandered in her weeds
 Of mourning, persecuted, scorned, reproached,
 And buffeted, and killed; in members few, 830
 Though seeming many whiles; then fewest, oft.
 When seeming most. She still had hung her harp
 Upon the willow-tree, and sighed, and wept
 From age to age. Satan began the war,
 And all his angels, and all wicked men,
 Against her fought by wile, or fierce attack,
 Six thousand years; but fought in vain. She stood.
 Troubled on every side, but not distressed;
 Weeping, but yet despairing not; cast down,
 But not destroyed: for she upon the palms 840
 Of God was graven, and precious in his sight,
 As apple of his eye; and, like the bush
 On Midia's mountain seen, burned unconsumed;
 But to the wilderness retiring, dwelt,
 Debased in sackcloth, and forlorn in tears.

As yet had sung the scarlet-coloured Whore,
 Who on the breast of civil power reposed
 Her harlot head, (the Church a harlot then,
 When first she wedded civil power,) and drank
 The blood of martyred saints,—whose priests were lords, 850
 Whose coffers held the gold of every land,
 Who held a cup of all pollutions full,
 Who with a double horn the people pushed,
 And raised her forehead, full of blasphemy,
 Above the holy God, usurping oft

Jehovah's incommunicable names.

The nations had been dark; the Jews had pined,
Scattered without a name, beneath the Curse;
War had abounded, Satan raged, unchained;
And earth had still been black with moral gloom. 860

But now the cry of men oppressed went up
Before the Lord, and to remembrance came
The tears of all his saints, their tears, and groans.
Wise men had read the number of the name;
The prophet-years had rolled; the time, and times,
And half a time, were now fulfilled complete;
The seven fierce vials of the wrath of God,
Poured by seven angels strong, were shed abroad
Upon the earth and emptied to the dregs;
The prophecy for confirmation stood; 870
And all was ready for the sword of God.

The righteous saw, and fled without delay
Into the chambers of Omnipotence.
The wicked mocked, and sought for erring cause,
To satisfy the dismal state of things;
The public credit gone, the fear in time
Of peace, the starving want in time of wealth,
The insurrection muttering in the streets,
And pallid consternation spreading wide;
And leagues, though holy termed, first ratified 880
In hell, on purpose made to under-prop
Iniquity, and crush the sacred truth.

Meantime, a mighty angel stood in heaven,
And cried aloud, "Associate now yourselves,
Ye princes, potentates, and men of war,
And mitred heads, associate now yourselves,
And be dispersed; embattle, and be broken.
Gird on your armour, and be dashed to dust.
Take counsel, and it shall be brought to naught.
Speak, and it shall not stand." And suddenly 890
The armies of the saints, imbannered, stood
On Zion hill; and with them angels stood

In squadron bright, and chariots of fire ;
 And with them stood the Lord, clad like a man
 Of war, and, to the sound of thunder, led
 The battle on. Earth shook, the kingdoms shook ;
 The Beast, the lying Seer, dominions, fell ;
 Thrones, tyrants fell, confounded in the dust,
 Scattered and driven before the breath of God,
 As chaff of summer threshing floor, before 900
 The wind. Three days the battle wasting slew.
 The sword was full, the arrow drunk with blood ;
 And to the supper of Almighty God,
 Spread in Hamonah's vale, the fowls of heaven,
 And every beast, invited, came, and fed
 On captains' flesh, and drank the blood of kings.

And, lo ! another angel stood in heaven,
 Crying aloud with mighty voice, " Fallen, fallen,
 Is Babylon the Great, to rise no more.
 Rejoice, ye prophets ! over her rejoice, 910
 Apostles ! holy men, all saints, rejoice !
 And glory give to God and to the Lamb."
 And all the armies of disburdened earth,
 As voice of many waters, and as voice
 Of thunderings, and voice of multitudes,
 Answered, Amen. And every hill and rock,
 And sea, and every beast, answered, Amen.
 Europa answered, and the farthest bounds
 Of woody Chili, Asia's fertile coasts,
 And Afric's burning wastes, answered, Amen. 920
 And Heaven, rejoicing, answered back, Amen.

Not so the wicked. They afar were heard
 Lamenting. Kings, who drank her cup of whoredoms,
 Captains, and admirals, and mighty men,
 Who lived deliciously ; and merchants, rich
 With merchandise of gold, and wine, and oil ;
 And those who traded in the souls of men,
 Known by their gaudy robes of priestly pomp ;—
 All these afar off stood, crying, Alas ! [930
 Alas ! and wept, and gnashed their teeth, and groaned,

And, with the owl that on her ruins sat,
Made dolorous concert in the ear of Night.
And over her again the Heavens rejoiced,
And Earth returned again the loud response.

Thrice happy days! thrice blessed the man who saw
Their dawn! The Church and State, that long had held
Unholy intercourse, were now divorced;
Princes were righteous men, judges upright;
And first, in general, now—for in the worst
Of times there were some honest seers—the priest 940
Sought other than the fleece among his flocks,
Best paid when God was honored most; and, like
A cedar, nourished well, Jerusalem grew,
And towered on high, and spread, and flourished fair;
And underneath her boughs the nations lodged,
All nations lodged, and sung the song of peace.
From the four winds, the Jews, eased of the Curse,
Returned, and dwelt with God in Jacob's land,
And drank of Sharon and of Carmel's vine. [950
Satan was bound, though bound, not banished quite,
But lurked about the timorous skirts of things,
Ill lodged, and thinking whiles to leave the earth,
And with the wicked,—for some wicked were,—
Held midnight meetings, as the saints were wont,
Fearful of day, who once was as the sun,
And worshipped more. The bad, but few, became
A taunt and hissing now, as heretofore
The good; and, blushing, hasted out of sight.
Disease was none; the voice of war forgot;
The sword, a share; a pruning-hook, the spear. 960
Men grew and multiplied upon the earth,
And filled the city and the waste; and Death
Stood waiting for the lapse of tardy Age,
That mocked him long. Men grew and multiplied,
But lacked not bread; for God his promise brought
To mind, and blessed the land with plenteous rain,
And made it blessed for dews and precious things
Of heaven, and blessings of the deep beneath,
And blessings of the sun and moon, and fruits

Of day and night, and blessings of the vale, 970
 And precious things of the eternal hills,
 And all the fulness of perpetual spring.

The prison-house, where chained felons pined,
 Threw open his ponderous doors, let in the light
 Of heaven, and grew into a church, where God
 Was worshipped. None were ignorant, selfish none.
 Love took the place of law ; where'er you met
 A man, you met a friend, sincere and true.
 Kind looks foretold as kind a heart within ;
 Words as they sounded, meant ; and promises 980
 Were made to be performed. Thrice happy days !
 Philosophy was sanctified, and saw
 Perfections that she thought a fable, long.
 Revenge his dagger dropped, and kissed the hand
 Of Mercy ; Anger cleared his cloudy brow,
 And sat with Peace ; Envy grew red, and smiled
 On Worth ; Pride stooped, and kissed Humility ;
 Lust washed his miry hands, and, wedded, leaned
 On chaste Desire ; and Falsehood laid aside
 His many-folded cloak, and bowed to Truth ; 990
 And Treachery up from his mining came,
 And walked above the ground with righteous Faith :
 And Covetousness unclenched his sinewy hand,
 And opened his door to Charity, the fair ;
 Hatred was lost in Love ; and Vanity,
 With a good conscience pleased, her feathers cropped ;
 Sloth in the morning rose with Industry ;
 To Wisdom Folly turned ; and Fashion turned
 Deception off, in act as good as word.
 The hand that held a whip was lifted up 1000
 To bless ; slave was a word in ancient books
 Met, only ; every man was free ; and all
 Feared God, and served him day and night in love.

How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then !
 How gloriously from Zion Hill she looked !
 Clothed with the sun, and in her train the moon,
 And on her head a coronet of stars,

And girdling round her waist, with heavenly grace,
 The bow of Mercy bright ; and in her hand
 Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope. 1010

Desire of every land ! the nations came,
 And worshipped at her feet ; all nations came,
 Flocking like doves : Columba's painted tribes,
 That from Magellan to the Frozen Bay,
 Beneath the Arctic, dwelt ; and drank the tides
 Of Amazona, prince of earthly streams ;
 Or slept at noon beneath the giant shade
 Of Andes' mount ; or, roving northward, heard
 Niagara sing, from Erie's billow down 1020
 To Frontenac, and hunted thence the fur
 To Labrador : and Afric's dusky swarms,
 That from Morocco to Angola dwelt,
 And drank the Niger from his native wells,
 Or roused the lion in Numidia's groves ;
 The tribes that sat among the fabled cliffs
 Of Atlas, looking to Atlanta's wave ;
 With joy and melody, arose and came.
 Zara awoke and came, and Egypt came,
 Casting her idol gods into the Nile.
 Black Ethiopia, that, shadowless, 1030
 Beneath the Torrid burned, arose and came.
 Dauma and Medra, and the pirate tribes
 Of Algeri, with incense came, and pure
 Offerings, annoying now the seas no more.
 The silken tribes of Asia, flocking, came,
 Innumerable : Ishmael's wandering race, that rode
 On camels o'er the spicy tract that lay
 From Persia to the Red Sea coast ; the king
 Of broad Cathay, with numbers infinite,
 Of many lettered casts, and all the tribes 1040
 That dwelt from Tigris to the Ganges' wave,
 And worshipped fire, or Brahma, fabled god ;
 Cashmeres, Circassians, Banyans, tender race !
 That swept the insect from their path, and lived
 On herbs and fruits ; and those who peaceful dwelt
 Along the shady avenue that stretched

From Agra to Lahore; and all the hosts
 That owned the Crescent late, deluded long;
 The Tartar hordes, that roamed from Oby's bank,
 Ungoverned, southward to the wondrous Wall. 1050
 The tribes of Europe came: the Greek, redeemed
 From Turkish thrall, the Spaniard came, and Gaul,
 And Britain with her ships, and, on his sledge,
 The Laplander, that nightly watched the bear
 Circling the Pole; and those who saw the flames
 Of Hecla burn the drifted snow; the Russ,
 Long-whiskered, and equestrian Pole; and those
 Who drank the Rhine, or lost the evening sun
 Behind the Alpine towers; and she that sat
 By Arno, classic stream; Venice; or Rome, 1060
 Head quarters long of sin! first guileless now,
 And meaning as she seemed, stretched forth her hands;
 And all the Isles of ocean rose and came,
 Whether they heard the roll of banished tides,
 Antipodes to Albion's wave, or watched
 The Moon, ascending chalky Teneriffe,
 And with Atlanta holding nightly love.
 The Sun, the Moon, the Constellations, came:
 Thrice twelve and ten that watched the Antarctic sleep,
 Twice six that near the Ecliptic dwelt, thrice twelve
 And one, that with the Streamers danced, and saw 1070
 The Hyperborean Ice guarding the Pole.
 The East, the West, the South, and snowy North,
 Rejoicing met, and worshipped reverently
 Before the Lord, in Zion's holy hill;
 And all the places round about were blessed.

The animals, as once in Eden, lived
 In peace. The wolf dwelt with the lamb, the bear
 And leopard with the ox. With looks of love,
 The tiger and the scaly crocodile 1080
 Together met, at Gambia's palmy wave.
 Perched on the eagle's wing, the bird of song,
 Singing, arose, and visited the sun;
 And with the falcon sat the gentle lark.
 The little child leaped from his mother's arms,

And stroked the crested snake, and rolled unhurt
Among his speckled waves, and wished him home ;
And sauntering school-boys, slow returning, played
At eve about the lion's den, and wove,
Into his shaggy mane, fantastic flowers. 1080
To meet the husbandman, early abroad,
Hasted the deer, and waved its woody head,
And round his dewy steps, the hare, unscared,
Sported ; and toyed familiar with his dog.
The flocks and herds, o'er hill and valley spread,
Exulting, cropped the ever-budding herb.
The desert blossomed, and the barren sung.
Justice and Mercy, Holiness and Love,
Among the people walked, Messiah reigned,
And Earth kept Jubilee a thousand years. 1100

COURSE OF TIME.

Book VII.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK VI.

At the opening of the Book, the Bard glances at the final destruction of the Earth, as if the astonishing change were actually again taking place under his eye. But, checking himself, he proceeds to describe the years which followed the millennial rest.

Ungodliness again abounded. Ambition and love of ease, principles which had always struggled for the mastery of man, regained their ascendancy. Every form of sin, which had existed before the reign of Messiah, was renewed, and new forms were invented. The age was, however, enlightened and polished, and the universal contempt of God was wholly wilful.

In the meantime strange phenomena and disasters gave presage of Earth's approaching dissolution. Men disturbed not reformed, inquired the meaning in alarm; but soon forgot the whole in their guilty pleasures; and Earth hastened to fill up the measure of her wickedness.

Here the Bard pauses in his narrative, as the numerous occupants of heaven suspend their various employments to join in an evening hymn of praise. All are represented as turning towards the unvailed Godhead, while the sainted Isaiah takes the harp, and, standing before the throne, utters the holy song. At its close the thousands infinite, who 'circling stand, bowing afar,' devoutly respond their assent.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book VI.

RESUME thy tone of wo, immortal Harp !
The song of mirth is past, the Jubilee
Is ended, and the sun begins to fade !
Soon passed, for Happiness counts not the hours :
To her a thousand years seem as a day ;
A day, a thousand years to Misery.
Satan is loose, and Violence is heard,
And Riot in the street, and Revelry
Intoxicate, and Murder, and Revenge.
Put on your armour now, ye righteous ! put 10
The helmet of salvation on, and gird
Your loins about with truth ; add righteousness,
And add the shield of faith, and take the sword
Of God—awake and watch !—The day is near,
Great day of God Almighty and the Lamb !
The harvest of the earth is fully ripe ;
Vengeance begins to tread the great wine-press
Of fierceness and of wrath ; and Mercy pleads,
Mercy that pleaded long, she pleads—no more !
Whence comes that darkness ? whence those yells
of wo ? 20
What thunderings are these that shake the world ?
Why fall the lamps from heaven as blasted figs ?

Why tremble righteous men? why angels pale?
 Why is all fear? what has become of hope?
 God comes! God, in his car of vengeance, comes!—
 Hark! louder on the blast, come hollow shrieks
 Of dissolution! in the fitful scowl
 Of night, near and more near, angels of death
 Incessant flap their deadly wings, and roar
 Through all the fevered air! the mountains rock, 30
 The moon is sick, and all the stars of heaven
 Burn feebly! oft and sudden gleams the fire,
 Revealing awfully the brow of Wrath!
 The Thunder, long and loud, utters his voice,
 Responsive to the Ocean's troubled growl!
 Night comes, last night, the long, dark, dark, dark
 night,
 That has no morn beyond it, and no star!
 No eye of man hath seen a night like this!
 Heaven's trampled Justice girds itself for fight!
 Earth, to thy knees, and cry for mercy! cry 40
 With earnest heart, for thou art growing old
 And hoary, unrepented, unforgiven!
 And all thy glory mourns! The vintage mourns!
 Bashan and Carmel, mourn and weep! and mourn,
 Thou Lebanon! with all thy cedars, mourn.
 Sun! glorying in thy strength from age to age,
 So long observant of thy hour, put on
 Thy weeds of wo, and tell the Moon to weep;
 Utter thy grief at mid-day, morn, and even;
 Tell all the nations, tell the Clouds that sit 50
 About the portals of the east and west,
 And wanton with thy golden locks, to wait
 Thee not to-morrow, for no morrow comes!
 Tell men and women, tell the new-born child,
 And every eye that sees, to come, and see
 Thee set behind Eternity, for thou
 Shalt go to bed to-night, and ne'er awake!
 Stars! walking on the pavement of the sky,
 Out-sentinels of heaven, watching the earth,
 Cease dancing now; your lamps are growing dim, 60
 Your graves are dug among the dismal clouds,

And angels are assembling round your bier !
 Orion, mourn ! and Mazzaroth, and thou,
 Arcturus ! mourn, with all thy northern sons,
 Daughters of Pleiades ! that nightly shed
 Sweet influence, and thou, fairest of stars !
 Eye of the morning, weep ! and weep at eve !
 Weep setting, now to rise no more, "and flame
 On forehead of the dawn,"—as sung the bard,
 Great bard ! who used on Earth a seraph's lyre, 70
 Whose numbers wandered through eternity,
 And gave sweet foretaste of the heavenly harps !
 Minstrel of sorrow ! native of the dark,
 Shrub-loving Philomel, that wooed the Dews,
 At midnight from their starry beds, and, charmed,
 Held them around thy song till dawn awoke,
 Sad bird ! pour through the gloom thy weeping song,
 Pour all thy dying melody of grief,
 And with the turtle spread the wave of wo !
 Spare not thy reed, for thou shalt sing no more ! 80

Ye holy bards !—if yet a holy bard
 Remain,—what chord shall serve you now ! what harp !
 What harp shall sing the dying Sun asleep,
 And mourn behind the funeral of the Moon !
 What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless wo,
 Shall utter forth the groanings of the damned !
 And sing the obsequies of wicked souls !
 And wail their plunge in the eternal fire !—
 Hold, hold your hands ! hold, angels !—God laments,
 And draws a cloud of mourning round his throne ' 90
 The Organ of Eternity is mute !
 And there is silence in the Heaven of Heavens !

Daughters of beauty ' choice of beings made !
 Much praised, much blamed, much loved ; but fairer far
 Than aught beheld, than aught imagined else
 Fairest, and dearer than all else most dear ;
 Light of the darksome wilderness ! to Time
 As stars to night, whose eyes were spells that held
 The passenger forgetful of his way,

Whose steps were majesty, whose words were song,
 Whose smiles were hope, whose actions, perfect grace,
 Whose love, the solace, glory, and delight
 Of man, his boast, his riches, his renown ;
 When found, sufficient bliss ! when lost, despair !—
 Stars of creation ! images of love !
 Break up the fountains of your tears, your tears,
 More eloquent than learned tongue, or lyre
 Of purest note ! your sunny raiment stain,
 Put dust upon your heads, lament and weep,
 And utter all your minstrelsy of wo !

110

Go to, ye wicked, weep and howl ; for all
 That God hath written against you is at hand.
 The cry of Violence hath reached his ear,
 Hell is prepared, and Justice whets his sword
 Weep all of every name ! Begin the wo,
 Ye woods, and tell it to the doleful winds ;
 And doleful winds, wail to the howling hills ;
 And howling hills, mourn to the dismal vales ;
 And dismal vales, sigh to the sorrowing brooks ; [120
 And sorrowing brooks, weep to the weeping stream ;
 And weeping stream, awake the groaning deep ;
 And let the instrument take up the song,
 Responsive to the voice, harmonious wo !
 Ye Heavens, great arch-way of the universe,
 Put sackcloth on ; and Ocean, clothe thyself
 In garb of widowhood, and gather all
 Thy waves into a groan, and utter it,
 Long, loud, deep, piercing, dolorous, immense :
 'The occasion asks it !—Nature dies, and God
 And angels come to lay her in the grave !

130

But we have overleaped our theme ; behind,
 A little season waits a verse or two,
 The years that followed the millennial rest.
 Bad years they were ; and first, as signal sure,
 That at the core religion was diseased,
 The sons of Levi strove again for place,
 And eminence, and names of swelling pomp ;

Setting their feet upon the people's neck,
 And slumbering in the lap of civil power,
 Of civil power again tyrannical: 140
 And second sign, sure sign, whenever seen,
 That holiness was dying in a land,
 The Sabbath was profaned and set at naught;
 The honest seer, who spoke the truth of God
 Plainly, was left with empty walls; and round
 The frothy orator, who busked his tales
 In quackish pomp of noisy words, the ear
 Tickling, but leaving still the heart unprobed,
 The judgment uninformed,—numbers immense [150
 Flocked, gaping wide, with passions high inflamed;
 And on the way returning, heated, home,
 Of eloquence, and not of truth, conversed—
 Mean eloquence that wanted sacred truth.

Two principles from the beginning strove
 In human nature, still dividing man,—
 Sloth and activity; the lust of praise,
 And indolence that rather wished to sleep.
 And not unfrequently in the same mind
 They dubious contest held; one gaining now,
 And now the other crowned, and both again 160
 Keeping the field, with equal combat fought.
 Much different was their voice. Ambition called
 To action, Sloth invited to repose.
 Ambition early rose, and, being up,
 Toiled ardently, and late retired to rest;
 Sloth lay till mid-day, turning on his couch,
 Like ponderous door upon its weary hinge,
 And, having rolled him out with much ado,
 And many a dismal sigh, and vain attempt,
 He sauntered out, accoutred carelessly,— 170
 With half-oped, misty, unobservant eye,
 Somniferous, that weighed the object down
 On which its burden fell,—an hour or two,
 Then with a groan retired to rest again.
 The one, whatever deed had been achieved,
 Thought it too little, and too small the praise,

The other tried to think—for thinking so
 Answered his purpose best—that what of great
 Mankind could do had been already done ;
 And therefore laid him calmly down to sleep. 180

Different in mode, destructive both alike.
 Destructive always indolence ; and love
 Of fame destructive always too, if less
 Than praise of God it sought, content with less .
 Even then not current, if it sought his praise
 From other motive than resistless love ;
 Though base, main-spring of action in the world ;
 And, under name of vanity and pride,
 Was greatly practised on by cunning men.
 It opened the niggard's purse, clothed nakedness, 190
 Gave beggars food, and threw the Pharisee
 Upon his knees, and kept him long in act
 Of prayer ; it spread the lace upon the fop,
 His language trimmed, and planned his curious gait ;
 It stuck the feather on the gay coquette,
 And on her finger laid the heavy load
 Of jewellery ; it did—what did it not ?
 The gospel preached, the gospel paid, and sent
 The gospel ; conquered nations, cities built,
 Measured the furrow of the field with nice 200
 Directed share, shaped bulls, and cows, and rams,
 And threw the ponderous stone ; and, pitiful,
 Indeed, and much against the grain, it dragged
 The stagnant, dull, predestinated fool
 Through learning's halls, and made him labour much
 Abortively ; though sometimes not unpraised
 He left the sage's chair, and home returned,
 Making his simple mother think that she
 Had borne a man. In schools, designed to root
 Sin up, and plant the seeds of holiness 210
 In youthful minds, it held a signal place.
 The little infant man, by nature proud,
 Was taught the Scriptures by the love of praise,
 And grew religious as he grew in fame.
 And thus the principle, which out of heaven

The devil threw, and threw him down to hell,
 And keeps him there, was made an instrument
 To moralize and sanctify mankind,
 And in their hearts beget humility;
 With what success it needs not now to say. 220

Destructive both we said, activity
 And sloth : behold the last exemplified,
 In literary man. Not all at once,
 He yielded to the soothing voice of sleep ;
 But, having seen a bough of laurel wave,
 He effort made to climb ; and friends, and even
 Himself, talked of his greatness, as at hand,
 And, prophesying, drew his future life.
 Vain prophecy ! his fancy, taught by sloth,
 Saw, in the very threshold of pursuit, 230
 A thousand obstacles ; he halted first,
 And while he halted, saw his burning hopes
 Grow dim and dimmer still ; ambition's self,
 The advocate of loudest tongue, decayed ;
 His purposes, made daily, daily broken,
 Like plant uprooted oft, and set again,
 More sickly grew, and daily wavered more ,
 Till at the last, decision, quite worn out,
 Decision, fulcrum of the mental powers,
 Resigned the blasted soul to staggering chance , 240
 Sleep gathered fast, and weighed him downward still ;
 His eye fell heavy from the mount of fame ;
 His young resolves to benefit the world
 Perished and were forgotten ; he shut his ear
 Against the painful news of rising worth ;
 And drank with desperate thirst the poppy's juice ;
 A deep and mortal slumber settled down
 Upon his weary faculties oppressed ;
 He rolled from side to side, and rolled again ; [250
 And snored, and groaned, and withered, and expired,
 And rotted on the spot, leaving no name.

The hero best example gives of toil
 Unsanctified. One word his history writes.

“ He was a murderer above the laws,
 And greatly praised for doing murderous deeds.”
 And now he grew, and reached his perfect growth,
 And also now the sluggard soundest slept,
 And by him lay the uninterred corpse.

Of every order, sin and wickedness,
 Deliberate, cool, malicious villany, 260
 This age, attained maturity, unknown
 Before ; and seemed in travail to bring forth
 Some last, enormous, monstrous deed of guilt,
 Original, unprecedented guilt,
 That might obliterate the memory
 Of what had hitherto been done most vile.
 Inventive men were paid, at public cost,
 To plan new modes of sin ; the holy Word
 Of God was burned, with acclamations loud ;
 New tortures were invented for the good ;— 270
 For still some good remained, as whiles through sky
 Of thickest clouds, a wandering star appeared ;—
 New oaths of blasphemy were framed and sworn ;
 And men in reputation grew, as grew
 The stature of their crimes. Faith was not found.
 Truth was not found, truth always scarce, so scarce
 That half the misery which groaned on earth,
 In ordinary times, was progeny
 Of disappointment, daily coming forth
 From broken promises, that might have ne’er 280
 Been made, or, being made, might have been kept ;
 Justice and mercy, too, were rare, obscured
 In cottage garb : before the palace door,
 The beggar rotted, starving in his rags ;
 And on the threshold of luxurious domes,
 The orphan child laid down his head, and died ,
 Nor unamusing was his piteous cry
 To women, who had now laid tenderness
 Aside, best pleased with sights of cruelty ;
 Flocking, when fouler lusts would give them time, 290
 To horrid spectacles of blood, where men,
 Or guiltless beasts, that seemed to look to heaven,

With eye imploring vengeance on the earth,
 Were tortured for the merriment of kings.
 The advocate for him who offered most
 Pleading; the scribe, according to the hire,
 Worded the lie, adding, for every piece,
 An oath of confirmation; judges raised
 One hand to intimate the sentence, death,
 Imprisonment, or fine, or loss of goods, 300
 And in the other held a lusty bribe,
 Which they had taken to give the sentence wrong,
 So managing the scale of justice still,
 'That he was wanting found who poorest seemed.

But laymen most renowned for devilish deeds,
 Laboured at distance still behind the priest;
 He shorn his sheep, and, having packed the wool,
 Sent them unguarded to the hill of wolves;
 And to the bowl deliberately sat down,
 And with his mistress mocked at sacred things. 310

The theatre was, from the very first,
 The favourite haunt of Sin, though honest men,
 Some very honest, wise, and worthy men,
 Maintained it might be turned to good account,
 And so perhaps it might, but never was.
 From first to last, it was an evil place:
 And now such things were acted there, as made
 The devils blush; and from the neighbourhood,
 Angels and holy men, trembling, retired:
 And what with dreadful aggravation crowned 320
 This dreary time, was sin against the light.
 All men knew God, and, knowing, disobeyed;
 And gloried to insult him to his face.

Another feature only we shall mark.
 It was withal a highly polished age,
 And scrupulous in ceremonious rite.
 When stranger stranger met upon the way,
 First, each to each bowed most respectfully,
 And large profession made of humble service,

And then the stronger took the other's purse, 330
And he that stabbed his neighbour to the heart,
Stabbed him politely, and returned the blade
Reeking into its sheath with graceful air.

Meantime the earth gave symptoms of her end,
And all the scenery above proclaimed,
That the great last catastrophe was near.
The Sun at rising staggered and fell back,
As one too early up, after a night
Of late debauch; then rose, and shone again, [340
Brighter than wont; and sickened again, and paused
In zenith altitude, as one fatigued;
And shed a feeble twilight ray at noon,
Rousing the wolf before his time to chase
The shepherd and his sheep, that sought for light,
And darkness found, astonished, terrified;
Then, out of course, rolled furious down the west,
As chariot reined by awkward charioteer;
And, waiting at the gate, he on the earth
Gazed, as he thought he ne'er might see't again.
The bow of mercy, heretofore so fair, 350
Ribbed with the native hues of heavenly love,
Disastrous colours showed, unseen till now;
Changing upon the watery gulf, from pale
To fiery red, and back again to pale;
And o'er it hovered wings of wrath. The Moon
Swaggered in midst of heaven, grew black, and dark
Unclouded, uneclipsed. The Stars fell down,
Tumbling from off their towers like drunken men,
Or seemed to fall; and glimmered now, and now
Sprang out in sudden blaze and dimmed again, 360
As lamp of foolish virgin lacking oil.
The heavens, this moment, looked serene; the next,
Glowed like an oven with God's displeasure hot.

Nor less, below, was intimation given,
Of some disaster great and ultimate.
The tree that bloomed, or hung with clustering fruit.
Untouched by visible calamity

Of frost or tempest, died and came again.
The flower and herb fell down as sick ; then rose
And fell again. The fowls of every hue, 370
Crowding together, sailed on weary wing ;
And, hovering, oft they seemed about to light ;
Then soared, as if they thought the earth unsafe.
The cattle look'd with meaning face on man.
Dogs howled, and seemed to see more than their mas-
ters.

And there were sights that none had seen before ;
And hollow, strange, unprecedented sounds,
And earnest whisperings ran along the hills
At dead of night ; and long, deep, endless sighs,
Came from the dreary vale ; and from the waste 380
Came horrid shrieks, and fierce unearthly groans,
The wail of evil spirits, that now felt
The hour of utter vengeance near at hand.
The winds from every quarter blew at once,
With desperate violence, and, whirling, took
The traveller up, and threw him down again,
At distance from his path, confounded, pale ;
And shapes, strange shapes ! in winding sheets were
seen,
Gliding through night, and singing funeral songs,
And imitating sad, sepulchral rites ; 390
And voices talked among the clouds, and still
The words that men could catch were spoken of them,
And seemed to be the words of wonder great,
And expectation of some vast event.
Earth shook, and swam, and reeled, and opened her
jaws,
By Earthquake tossed, and tumbled to and fro ;
And, louder than the ear of man had heard,
The Thunder bellowed, and the Ocean groaned.

The race of men, perplexed, but not reformed,
Flocking together, stood in earnest crowds, 400
Conversing of the awful state of things.
Some curious explanations gave, unlearned ;
Some tried affectedly to laugh, and some

Gazed stupidly ; but all were sad and pale,
 And wished the comment of the wise. Nor less
 These prodigies, occurring night and day,
 Perplexed philosophy. The magi tried,—
 Magi, a name not seldom given to fools,
 In the vocabulary of earthly speech,—
 They tried to trace them still to second cause, 410
 But scarcely satisfied themselves ; though round
 Their deep deliberations, crowding came,
 And, wondering at their wisdom, went away,
 Much quieted and very much deceived,
 The people, always glad to be deceived.

These warnings passed, they, unregarded, passed,
 And all in wonted order calmly moved.
 The pulse of Nature regularly beat,
 And on her cheek the bloom of perfect health
 Again appeared. Deceitful pulse ! and bloom 420
 Deceitful ! and deceitful calm ! The Earth
 Was old, and worn within ; but, like the man
 Who noticed not his mid-day strength decline,
 Sliding so gently round the curvature
 Of life, from youth to age,—she knew it not.
 The calm was like the calm, which oft the man,
 Dying, experienced before his death ;
 The bloom was but a hectic flush, before
 The eternal paleness. But all these were taken,
 By this last race of men, for tokens of good ; 430
 And blustering public News aloud proclaimed—
 News always gabbling ere they well had thought—
 Prosperity, and joy, and peace ; and mocked
 The man who, kneeling, prayed, and trembled still ;
 And all in earnest to their sins returned.

It was not so in heaven. The elders round
 The Throne conversed about the state of man,
 Conjecturing—for none of certain knew—
 That Time was at an end. They gazed intense
 Upon the Dial's face, which yonder stands 440
 In gold, before the Sun of Righteousness,

Jehovah, and computes time, seasons, years
 And destinies, and slowly numbers o'er
 The mighty cycles of eternity;
 By God alone completely understood,
 But read by all, revealing much to all.
 And now, to saints of eldest skill, the ray,
 Which on the gnomon fell of Time, seemed sent
 From level west, and hasting quickly down.
 The holy Virtues, watching, saw, besides, 450
 Great preparation going on in heaven,
 Betokening great event, greater than aught
 That first-created seraphim had seen.
 The faithful messengers, who have for wing
 The lightning, waiting, day and night, on God,
 Before his face, beyond their usual speed,
 On pinion of celestial light were seen,
 Coming and going, and their road was still
 From heaven to earth, and back again to heaven:
 The angel of Mercy, bent before the Throne, 460
 By earnest pleading, seemed to hold the hand
 Of Vengeance back, and win a moment more
 Of late repentance for some sinful world
 In jeopardy: and, now, the hill of God,
 The mountain of his majesty, rolled flames
 Of fire, now smiled with momentary love,
 And now again with fiery fierceness burned; *
 And from behind the darkness of his Throne,
 Through which created vision never saw,
 The living Thunders, in their native caves, 470
 Muttered the terrors of Omnipotence,
 And ready seemed, impatient to fulfil
 Some errand of exterminating wrath.

Meanwhile the Earth increased in wickedness,
 And hasted daily to fill up her cup.
 Satan raged loose, Sin had her will, and Death
 Enough. Blood trode upon the heels of Blood,
 Revenge, in desperate mood, at midnight met
 Revenge, War brayed to War, Deceit deceived
 Deceit, Lie cheated Lie, and Treachery 480

Mined under Treachery, and Perjury
 Swore back on Perjury, and Blasphemy
 Arose with hideous Blasphemy, and Curse
 Loud answered Curse ; and drunkard, stumbling, fell
 O'er drunkard fallen ; and husband husband met,
 Returning each from other's bed defiled ;
 Thief stole from thief, and robber on the way
 Knocked robber down, and Lewdness, Violence,
 And Hate, met Lewdness, Violence, and Hate.
 Oh, Earth ! thy hour was come ! the last elect 490
 Was born, complete the number of the good,
 And the last sand fell from the glass of Time.
 The cup of guilt was full up to the brim ;
 And Mercy, weary with beseeching, had
 Retired behind the sword of Justice, red
 With ultimate and unrepenting wrath ;
 But man knew not : he o'er his bowl laughed loud,
 And, prophesying, said, " To-morrow shall
 As this day be, and more abundant still ! " [500
 As thou shalt hear—But, hark ! the trumpet sounds,
 And calls to evening song ; for, though with hymn
 Eternal, course succeeding course extol
 In presence of the incarnate, holy God,
 And celebrate his never-ending praise,—
 Duly at morn and night, the multitudes
 Of men redeemed, and angels, all the hosts
 Of glory, join in universal song,
 And pour celestial harmony, from harps
 Above all number, eloquent and sweet,
 Above all thought of melody conceived. 5)
 And now behold the fair inhabitants,
 Delightful sight ! from numerous business turn,
 And round and round through all the extent of bliss
 Towards the temple of Jehovah bow,
 And worship reverently before his face !

Pursuits are various here, suiting all tastes,
 Though holy all, and glorifying God.
 Observe yon band pursue the sylvan stream :
 Mounting among the cliffs, they pull the flower,

Springing as soon as pulled, and, marvelling, pry 520
 Into its veins, and circulating blood,
 And wondrous mimicry of higher life ;
 Admire its colours, fragrance, gentle shape ;
 And thence admire the God who made it so—
 So simple, complex, and so beautiful.

Behold yon other band in airy robes
 Of bliss. They weave the sacred bower of rose
 And myrtle shade, and shadowy verdant bay,
 And laurel, towering high ; and round their song,
 The pink and lily bring, and amaranth, 530
 Narcissus sweet, and jessamine ; and bring
 The clustering vine, stooping with flower and fruit,
 The peach and orange, and the sparkling stream,
 Warbling with nectar to their lips unasked ;
 And talk the while of everlasting love.

On yonder hill, behold another band,
 Of piercing, steady, intellectual eye,
 And spacious forehead of sublimest thought.
 They reason deep of present, future, past ;
 And trace effect to cause ; and meditate 540
 On the eternal laws of God, which bind
 Circumference to centre ; and survey,
 With optic tubes, that fetch remotest stars
 Near them, the systems circling round immense
 Innumerable. See how,—as he, the sage,
 Among the most renowned in days of Time,
 Renowned for large, capacious, holy soul,
 Demonstrates clearly motion, gravity,
 Attraction, and repulsion, still opposed ;
 And dips into the deep, original, 550
 Unknown, mysterious elements of things,—
 See how the face of every auditor
 Expands with admiration of the skill,
 Omnipotence, and boundless love of God !

'These other, sitting near the tree of life,
 In robes of linen flowing white and clean,

Of holiest aspect, of divinest soul,
Angels and men,—into the glory look
Of the Redeeming Love, and turn the leaves 560
Of man's redemption o'er, the secret leaves,
Which none on earth were found worthy to open.
And, as they read the mysteries divine,
The endless mysteries of salvation, wrought
By God's incarnate Son, they humbler bow
Before the Lamb, and glow with warmer love.

These other, there relaxed beneath the shade
Of yon embowering palms, with friendship smile,
And talk of ancient days, and young pursuits,
Of dangers passed, of godly triumphs won ;
And sing the legends of their native land, 570
Less pleasing far than this their Father's house.

Behold that other band, half lifted up
Between the hill and dale, reclined beneath
The shadow of impending rocks, 'mong streams,
And thundering waterfalls, and waving boughs ;
That band of countenance sublime and sweet,
Whose eye, with piercing, intellectual ray,
Now beams severe, or now bewildered seems,
Left rolling wild, or fixed in idle gaze,
While Fancy and the Soul are far from home ; 580
These hold the pencil, art divine ! and throw
Before the eye remembered scenes of love ;
Each picturing to each the hills, and skies,
And treasured stories of the world he left ;
Or, gazing on the scenery of heaven,
They dip their hand in colour's native well,
And, on the everlasting canvass, dash
Figures of glory, imagery divine,
With grace and grandeur in perfection knit.

But, whatso'er these spirits blessed pursue, 590
Where'er they go, whatever sights they see
Of glory and bliss through all the tracts of heaven,—
The centre, still, the figure eminent,

Whither they ever turn, on whom all eyes
 Repose with infinite delight, is God,
 And his incarnate Son, the Lamb once slain
 On Calvary, to ransom ruined men.

None idle here. Look where thou wilt, they all
 Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit;
 Not happy else. Hence is it that the song 600
 Of heaven is ever new; for daily thus,
 And nightly new discoveries are made
 Of God's unbounded wisdom, power, and love,
 Which give the understanding larger room,
 And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise.

Behold they cease! and every face to God
 Turns; and we pause from high poetic theme,
 Not worthy least of being sung in heaven;
 And on unvailed Godhead look from this, 610
 Our oft-frequented hill. He takes the harp,
 Nor needs to seek befitting phrase: unsought,
 Numbers harmonious roll along the lyre;
 As river in its native bed, they flow
 Spontaneous, flowing with the tide of thought.
 He takes the harp—a bard of Judah leads,
 This night, the boundless song, the bard that once,
 When Israel's king was sad and sick to death,
 A message brought of fifteen added years.
 Before the Throne he stands sublime, in robes
 Of glory, and now his fingers wake the chords 620
 To praise, which we and all in heaven repeat.

Harps of Eternity! begin the song,
 Redeemed and angel harps! begin to God,
 Begin the anthem ever sweet and new,
 While I extol Him, holy, just, and good.
 Life, beauty, light, intelligence, and love
 Eternal, uncreated, infinite!
 Unsearchable Jehovah! God of truth,
 Maker, upholder, governor of all!
 Thyself unmade, ungoverned, unupheld! 630

Omnipotent, unchangeable, Great God !
Exhaustless fulness ! giving unimpaired !
Bounding immensity, unspread, unbound !
Highest and best ! beginning, middle, end !
All-seeing Eye ! all-seeing, and unseen !
Hearing, unheard ! all-knowing, and unknown !
Above all praise ! above all height of thought !
Proprietor of immortality !
Glory ineffable ! bliss underived !
Of old thou builst thy throne on righteousness, 640
Before the morning Stars their song began,
Or silence heard the voice of praise. Thou laidst
Eternity's foundation stone, and sawst
Life and existence out of Thee begin.
Mysterious more, the more displayed, where still
Upon thy glorious Throne thou sitst alone,
Hast sat alone, and shalt for ever sit
Alone, Invisible, Immortal One !
Behind essential brightness unbeheld.
Incomprehensible ! what weight shall weigh, 650
What measure measure Thee ! What know we more
Of Thee, what need to know, than Thou hast taught,
And bidst us still repeat, at morn and even ?—
God ! Everlasting Father ! Holy One !
Our God, our Father, our Eternal All !
Source whence we came, and whither we return ;
Who made our spirits, who our bodies made,
Who made the heaven, who made the flowery land,
Who made all made, who orders, governs all,
Who walks upon the wind, who holds the wave 660
In hollow of thy hand, whom thunders wait,
Whom tempests serve, whom flaming fires obey,
Who guides the circuit of the endless years,
And sitst on high, and makest creation's top
Thy footstool, and beholdst, below Thee, all—
All naught, all less than naught, and vanity.
Like transient dust that hovers on the scale,
Ten thousand worlds are scattered in thy breath.
Thou sitst on high, and measurest destinies,
And days, and months, and wide-revolving years · 670

And dost according to thy holy will;
 And none can stay thy hand, and none withhold
 Thy glory; for in judgment, Thou, as well
 As mercy, art exalted, day and night.
 Past, present, future, magnify thy name.
 Thy works all praise Thee, all thy angels praise,
 Thy saints adore, and on thy altars burn
 The fragrant incense of perpetual love.
 They praise Thee now, their hearts, their voices praise,
 And swell the rapture of the glorious song. 680
 Harp! lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout!
 And loudest, ye redeemed! glory to God,
 And to the Lamb who bought us with his blood,
 From every kindred, nation, people, tongue;
 And washed, and sanctified, and saved our souls;
 And gave us robes of linen pure, and crowns
 Of life, and made us kings and priests to God.
 Shout back to ancient Time! Sing loud, and wave
 Your palms of triumph! sing, Where is thy sting,
 O Death! where is thy victory, O Grave! 690
 Thanks be to God, eternal thanks, who gave
 Us victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
 Harp! lift thy voice on high! shout, angels, shout!
 And loudest, ye redeemed! glory to God,
 And to the Lamb, all glory and all praise,
 All glory and all praise, at morn and even,
 That come and go eternally, and find
 Us happy still, and Thee for ever blessed
 Glory to God and to the Lamb. Amen.
 For ever, and for evermore. Amen. 700

And those who stood upon the sea of glass,
 And those who stood upon the battlements
 And lofty towers of New Jerusalem,
 And those who circling stood, bowing afar,
 Exalted on the everlasting hills,
 Thousands of thousands, thousands infinite,
 With voice of boundless love, answered, Amen.
 And through Eternity near, and remote,
 The worlds, adoring, echoed back, Amen.

And God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, 710
The One Eternal, smiled superior bliss !
And every eye, and every face in heaven,
Reflecting and reflected, beamed with love.

Nor did he not, the Virtue new arrived,
From Godhead gain an individual smile,
Of high acceptance, and of welcome high,
And confirmation evermore in good.
Meantime the landscape glowed with holy joy.
Zephyr, with wing dipped from the well of life,
Sporting through Paradise, shed living dew ; 720
The flowers, the spicy shrubs, the lawns, refreshed,
Breathed their selectest balm, breathed odours, such
As angels love ; and all the trees of heaven,
The cedar pine, and everlasting oak,
Rejoicing on the mountains, clapped their hands.

COURSE OF TIME

Book VII.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK VII

After the Hymn of praise, the Bard resumes his story. He relates the destruction of the Earth, the Resurrection of the dead, and the Transformation of the living.

On the morn of the final day every appearance of Nature was as usual ; but at mid day universal darkness prevailed, and every action and motion ceased ; an Angel from Heaven proclaimed the end of Time, and another blew the Trump of God, at which the dead awoke and the living were changed.

The remainder of the Book is occupied with a description of circumstances connected with the momentous scene ; the living surprised in the midst of their thousand various occupations of study, labor, pleasure, crime ; the dead of every age and nation springing to life, in the wilderness, the cultivated field, amid ancient ruins, in the streets of populous cities, from the depths of the mighty waters.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book VII.

As one who meditates at evening tide,
Wandering alone by voiceless solitudes,
And flies, in fancy, far beyond the bounds
Of visible and vulgar things, and things
Discovered hitherto, pursuing tracts
As yet untravelled and unknown, through vast
Of new and sweet imaginings ; if chance
Some airy harp, waked by the gentle sprites
Of twilight, or light touch of sylvan maid,
In soft succession fall upon his ear, 10
And fill the desert with its heavenly tones ;
He listens intense, and pleased exceedingly,
And wishes it may never stop ; yet when
It stops, grieves not ; but to his former thoughts
With fondest haste returns : so did the Seer,
So did his audience, after worship passed,
And praise in heaven, return to sing, to hear
Of man, not worthy less the sacred lyre,
Or the attentive ear ; and thus the bard,
Not unbesought, again resumed his song. 20

In custom'd glory bright, that morn, the Sun
Rose, visiting the earth with light, and heat,

And joy ; and seemed as full of youth, and strong
 To mount the steep of heaven, as when the Stars
 Of morning sung to his first dawn, and night
 Fled from his face ; the spacious sky received
 Him, blushing as a bride, when on her looked
 The bridegroom ; and, spread out beneath his eye,
 Earth smiled Up to his warm embrace, the Dews,
 That all night long had wept his absence, flew ; 30
 The herbs and flowers their fragrant stores unlocked,
 And gave the wanton breeze, that, newly woke,
 Revelled in sweets, and from its wings shook health,
 A thousand grateful smells ; the joyous woods
 Dried in his beams their locks, wet with the drops
 Of night ; and all the sons of music sung
 Their matin song—from arboured bower, the thrush,
 Concerting with the lark that hymned on high.
 On the green hill the flocks, and in the vale
 The herds, rejoiced ; and, light of heart, the hind 40
 Eyed amorously the milk-maid as she passed,
 Not heedless, though she looked another way.

No sign was there of change. All nature moved
 In wonted harmony. Men, as they met,
 In morning salutation, praised the day.
 And talked of common things. The husbandman
 Prepared the soil, and silver-tongued Hope
 Promised another harvest. In the streets,
 Each wishing to make profit of his neighbour,
 Merchants, assembling, spoke of trying times, 50
 Of bankruptcies, and markets glutted full,
 Or, crowding to the beach,—where, to their ear,
 The oath of foreign accent, and the noise
 Uncouth of trade's rough sons, made music sweet,
 Elate with certain gain,—beheld the bark,
 Expected long, enriched with other climes,
 Into the harbour safely steer ; or saw,
 Parting with many a weeping farewell sad,
 And blessing uttered rude, and sacred pledge,
 The rich-laden carack, bound to distant shore, 60
 And hopefully talked of her coming back,

With richer fraught ; or sitting at the desk,
 In calculation deep and intricate
 Of loss and profit balancing, relieved,
 At intervals, the irksome task, with thought
 Of future ease, retired in villa snug.

With subtle look, amid his parchments, sat
 The lawyer, weaving his sophistries for court
 To meet at mid-day. On his weary couch,
 Fat Luxury, sick of the night's debauch, 70
 Lay groaning, fretful at the obtrusive beam,
 That through his lattice peeped derisively.
 'The restless miser had begun again
 To count his heaps. Before her toilet stood
 The fair, and, as with guileful skill she decked
 Her loveliness, thought of the coming ball,
 New lovers, or the sweeter nuptial night.
 And evil men, of desperate, lawless life,
 By oath of deep damnation leagued to ill
 Remorselessly, fled from the face of day, 80
 Against the innocent their counsel held,
 Plotting unpardonable deeds of blood,
 And villanies of fearful magnitude.
 Despots, secured behind a thousand bolts,
 The workmanship of fear, forged chains for man.
 Senates were meeting, statesmen loudly talked
 Of national resources, war and peace,
 And sagely balanced empires soon to end ;
 And faction's jaded minions, by the page
 Paid for abuse and oft-repeated lies, 90
 In daily prints, the thoroughfare of news,
 For party schemes made interest, under cloak
 Of liberty, and right, and public weal.
 In holy conclave, bishops spoke of tithes,
 And of the awful wickedness of men.
 Intoxicate with sceptres, diadems,
 And universal rule, and panting hard
 For fame, heroes were leading on the brave
 To battle. Men, in science deeply read,
 And academic theory, foretold 100

Improvements vast ; and learned sceptics proved
That earth should with eternity endure—
Concluding madly, that there was no God.

No sign of change appeared : to every man
That day seemed as the past. From noontide path
The sun looked gloriously on earth, and all
Her scenes of giddy folly smiled secure,
When suddenly, alas, fair earth ! the sun
Was wrapped in darkness, and his beams returned
Up to the throne of God, and over all 110
The earth came night, moonless and starless night.
Nature stood still. The seas and rivers stood,
And all the winds and every living thing.
The cataract, that, like a giant wroth,
Rushed down impetuously, as seized at once,
By sudden frost, with all his hoary locks,
Stood still ; and beasts of every kind stood still.
A deep and dreadful silence reigned alone !
Hope died in every breast, and on all men [120
Came fear and trembling. None to his neighbour spoke.
Husband thought not of wife, nor of her child
The mother, nor friend of friend, nor foe of foe
In horrible suspense all mortals stood ;
And, as they stood and listened, chariots were heard
Rolling in heaven. Revealed in flaming fire,
The angel of God appeared in stature vast,
Blazing, and, lifting up his hand on high,
By Him that lives for ever, swore, that Time
Should be no more. Throughout, creation heard
And sighed ; all rivers, lakes, and seas, and woods, 130
Desponding waste, and cultivated vale,
Wild cave, and ancient hill, and every rock,
Sighed. Earth, arrested in her wonted path,
As ox struck by the lifted axe, when naught
Was feared, in all her entrails deeply groaned.
A universal crash was heard, as if
The ribs of Nature broke, and all her dark
Foundations failed ; and deadly paleness sat
On every face of man, and every heart

Grew chill, and every knee his fellow smote. 140
 None spoke, none stirred, none wept; for horror held
 All motionless, and fettered every tongue.
 Again, o'er all the nations silence fell:
 And, in the heavens, robed in excessive light,
 That drove the thick of darkness far aside,
 And walked with penetration keen, through all
 The abodes of men, another angel stood,
 And blew the trump of God: Awake, ye dead,
 Be changed, ye living, and put on the garb
 Of immortality. Awake, arise!— 150
 The God of judgment comes! This said the voice,
 And Silence, from eternity that slept
 Beyond the sphere of the creating Word,
 And all the noise of Time, awakened, heard.
 Heaven heard, and earth, and farthest hell, through all
 Her regions of despair; the ear of Death
 Heard, and the sleep that for so long a night
 Pressed on his leaden eyelids, fled; and all
 The dead awoke, and all the living changed.

Old men, that on their staff, bending, had leaned, 160
 Crazy and frail, or sat, benumbed with age,
 In weary listlessness, ripe for the grave,
 Felt through their sluggish veins and withered limbs,
 New vigour flow; the wrinkled face grew smooth;
 Upon the head, that Time had razored bare,
 Rose bushy locks; and as his son in prime
 Of strength and youth, the aged father stood.
 Changing herself, the mother saw her son
 Grow up, and suddenly put on the form
 Of manhood; and the wretch, that begging sat, 170
 Limbless, deformed, at corner of the way,
 Unmindful of his crutch, in joint and limb,
 Arose complete; and he, that on the bed
 Of mortal sickness, worn with sore distress,
 Lay breathing forth his soul to death, felt now
 The tide of life and vigour rushing back;
 And, looking up, beheld his weeping wife,
 And daughter fond, that o'er him, bending, stooped

To close his eyes. The frantic madman, too,
In whose confused brain reason had lost 180
Her way, long driven at random to and fro,
Grew sober, and his manacles fell off.
The newly-sheeted corpse arose, and stared
On those who dressed it; and the coffined dead,
That men were bearing to the tomb, awoke,
And mingled with their friends; and armies, which
The trump surprised, met in the furious shock
Of battle, saw the bleeding ranks, new fallen,
Rise up at once, and to their ghastly cheeks
Return the stream of life in healthy flow; 190
And as the anatomist, with all his band
Of rude disciples, o'er the subject hung,
And impolitely hewed his way, through bones
And muscles of the sacred human form,
Exposing barbarously to wanton gaze,
The mysteries of nature, joint embraced
His kindred joint, the wounded flesh grew up,
And suddenly the injured man awoke,
Among their hands, and stood arrayed complete 200
In immortality—forgiving scarce
The insult offered to his clay in death.

That was the hour, long wished for by the good,
Of universal jubilee to all
The sons of bondage: from the oppressor's hand
The scourge of violence fell, and from his back,
Healed of its stripes, the burden of the slave.

The youth of great religious soul, who sat
Retired in voluntary loneliness,
In reverie extravagant now wrapped,
Or poring now on book of ancient date, 210
With filial awe, and dipping oft his pen
To write immortal things; to pleasure deaf.
And joys of common men, working his way
With mighty energy, not uninspired,
Through all the mines of thought; reckless of pain,
And weariness, and wasted health, the scoff

Of Pride, or growl of Envy's hellish brood ;
 While Fancy, voyaged far beyond the bounds
 Of years revealed, heard many a future age,
 With commendation loud, repeat his name,— 220
 False prophetess ! the day of change was come,—
 Behind the shadow of eternity,
 He saw his visions set of earthly fame,
 For ever set ; nor sighed, while through his veins,
 In lighter current, ran immortal life ;
 His form renewed to undecaying health ;
 To undecaying health his soul, erewhile
 Not tuned amiss to God's eternal praise.

All men, in field and city, by the way,
 On land or sea, lolling in gorgeous hall, 230
 Or plying at the oar ; crawling in rags
 Obscure, or dazzling in embroidered gold ;
 Alone, in companies, at home, abroad ;
 In wanton merriment surprised and taken,
 Or kneeling reverently in act of prayer ;
 Or cursing recklessly, or uttering lies ;
 Or lapping greedily, from slander's cup,
 The blood of reputation ; or between
 Friendships and brotherhoods devising strife ;
 Or plotting to defile a neighbour's bed ; 240
 In duel met with dagger of revenge ;
 Or casting on the widow's heritage
 The eye of covetousness ; or, with full hand,
 On mercy's noiseless errands, unobserved,
 Administering ; or meditating fraud
 And deeds of horrid barbarous intent ;
 In full pursuit of unexperienced hope,
 Fluttering along the flowery path of youth ;
 Or steeped in disappointment's bitterness,
 The fevered cup that guilt must ever drink, 250
 When parched and fainting on the road of ill ;
 Beggar and king, the clown and haughty lord ;
 The venerable sage, and empty fop ;
 The ancient matron and the rosy bride ;
 The virgin chaste, and shrivelled harlot vile ;

The savage fierce, and man of science, mild ;
 The good and evil, in a moment, all
 Were changed, corruptible to incorrupt,
 And mortal to immortal, ne'er to change.

[260

And now, descending from the bowers of heaven,
 Soft airs o'er all the earth, spreading, were heard,
 And Hallelujahs sweet, the harmony
 Of righteous souls that came to repossess
 Their long-neglected bodies : and anon
 Upon the ear fell horribly the sound
 Of cursing, and the yells of damned despair,
 Uttered by felon spirits, that the trump
 Had summoned from the burning glooms of hell
 To put their bodies on, reserved for wo.

Now, starting up among the living changed, 270
 Appeared innumerable the risen dead.
 Each particle of dust was claimed : the turf,
 For ages trod beneath the careless foot
 Of men, rose, organized in human form ;
 The monumental stones were rolled away ;
 The doors of death were opened ; and in the dark
 And loathsome vault, and silent charnel house,
 Moving, were heard the mouldered bones, that sought
 Their proper place. Instinctive, every soul
 Flew to its clayey part : from grass-grown mould, 280
 The nameless spirit took its ashes up,
 Reanimate ; and, merging from beneath
 The flattered marble, undistinguished rose
 The great, nor heeded once the lavish rhyme,
 And costly pomp of sculptured garnish vain.
 The Memphian mummy, that, from age to age
 Descending, bought and sold a thousand times,
 In hall of curious antiquary stowed,
 Wrapped in mysterious weeds, the wondrous theme
 Of many an erring tale, shook off its rags ; 290
 And the brown son of Egypt stood beside
 The European, his last purchaser.
 In vale remote, the hermit rose, surprised

At crowds that rose around him, where he thought
 His slumbers had been single; and the bard,
 Who fondly covenanted with his friend,
 To lay his bones beneath the sighing bough
 Of some old lonely tree, rising, was pressed
 By multitudes that claimed their proper dust
 From the same spot; and he, that, richly hearsed, 300
 With gloomy garniture of purchased wo,
 Embalmed, in princely sepulchre was laid,
 Apart from vulgar men, built nicely round
 And round by the proud heir, who blushed to think
 His father's lordly clay should ever mix
 With peasant dust,—saw by his side awake
 The clown that long had slumbered in his arms.

The family tomb, to whose devouring mouth
 Descended sire and son, age after age,
 In long, unbroken, hereditary line, 310
 Poured forth, at once, the ancient father rude,
 And all his offspring of a thousand years.
 Refreshed from sweet repose, awoke the man
 Of charitable life—awoke and sung:
 And from his prison house, slowly and sad,
 As if unsatisfied with holding near
 Communion with the earth, the miser drew
 His carcass forth, and gnashed his teeth, and howled,
 Unsolaced by his gold and silver then.
 From simple stone in lonely wilderness, 320
 That hoary lay, o'er-lettered by the hand
 Of oft-frequenting pilgrim, who had taught
 The willow tree to weep, at morn and even,
 Over the sacred spot,—the martyr saint,
 To song of seraph harp, triumphant, rose,
 Well pleased that he had suffered to the death.
 “The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,”
 As sung the bard by Nature's hand anointed,
 In whose capacious giant numbers rolled
 The passions of old Time, fell lumbering down. 330
 All cities fell, and every work of man,
 And gave their portion forth of human dust,

Touched by the mortal finger of decay.
 Tree, herb, and flower, and every fowl of heaven,
 And fish, and animal, the wild and tame,
 Forthwith dissolving, crumbled into dust.

Alas! ye sons of strength, ye ancient oaks,
 Ye holy pines, ye elms, and cedars tall,
 Like towers of God, far seen on Carmel mount,
 Or Lebanon, that waved your boughs on high, 340
 And laughed at all the winds,—your hour was come!
 Ye laurels, ever green, and bays, that wont
 To wreath the patriot and the poet's brow,
 Ye myrtle bowers, and groves of sacred shade,
 Where Music ever sung, and Zephyr fanned
 His airy wing, wet with the dews of life,
 And Spring forever smiled, the fragrant haunt
 Of Love, and Health, and ever-dancing Mirth,—
 Alas! how suddenly your verdure died,
 And ceased your minstrelsy, to sing no more! 350
 Ye flowers of beauty, penciled by the hand
 Of God, who annually renewed your birth,
 To gem the virgin robes of Nature chaste,
 Ye smiling-featured daughters of the Sun!
 Fairer than queenly bride, by Jordan's stream
 Leading your gentle lives, retired, unseen;
 Or on the sainted cliffs on Zion hill
 Wandering, and holding with the heavenly dews,
 In holy revelry, your nightly loves,
 Watched by the stars, and offering, every morn, 360
 Your incense, grateful both to God and man;—
 Ye lovely, gentle things, alas! no spring
 Shall ever wake you now! ye withered all,
 All in a moment drooped, and on your roots
 The grasp of everlasting winter seized!
 Children of song, ye birds that dwelt in air,
 And stole your notes from angel's lyres, and first
 In levee of the morn, with eulogy
 Ascending, hailed the advent of the dawn;
 Or, roosted on the pensive evening bough, 370
 In melancholy numbers, sung the day

To rest ;—your little wings, failing, dissolved,
 In middle air, and on your harmony
 Perpetual silence fell ! Nor did his wing,
 That sailed in track of gods sublime, and fanned
 The sun, avail the eagle then ; quick smitten,
 His plumage withered in meridian height,
 And, in the valley, sunk the lordly bird,
 A clod of clay. Before the ploughman fell
 His steers, and in midway the furrow left. 380
 The shepherd saw his flocks around him turn
 To dust. Beneath his rider fell the steed
 To ruins : and the lion in his den
 Grew cold and stiff, or in the furious chase,
 With timid fawn, that scarcely missed his paws.
 On earth no living thing was seen but men,
 New-changed, or rising from the opening tomb.

Athens, and Rome, and Babylon, and Tyre,
 And she that sat on Thames, queen of the seas,
 Cities once famed on earth, convulsed through ail 390
 Their mighty ruins, threw their millions forth.
 Palmyra's dead, where Desolation sat,
 From age to age, well pleased, in solitude,
 And silence, save when traveller's foot, or owl
 Of night, or fragment mouldering down to dust,
 Broke faintly on his desert ear,—awoke.
 And Salem, holy city, where the Prince
 Of Life, by death, a second life secured
 To man, and with him, from the grave, redeemed,
 A chosen number brought, to retinue 400
 His great ascent on high, and give sure pledge,
 That death was foiled,—her generations, now,
 Gave up, of kings and priests, and Pharisees ;
 Nor even the Sadducee, who fondly said,
 No morn of resurrection e'er should come,
 Could sit the summons ; to his ear did reach
 The trumpet's voice, and, ill prepared for what
 He oft had proved should never be, he rose
 Reluctantly, and on his face began
 To burn eternal shame. The cities, too, 410

Of old ensepulchred beneath the flood,
Or deeply slumbering under mountains huge,
That Earthquake, servant of the wrath of God,
Had on their wicked population thrown ;
And marts of busy trade, long ploughed and sown,
By history unrecorded, or the song
Of bard, yet not forgotten their wickedness,
In heaven ;—poured forth their ancient multitudes,
That vainly wished their sleep had never broke.
From battle-fields, where men by millions met 420
To murder each his fellow, and make sport
To kings and heroes, things long since forgot,
Innumerable armies rose, unbannered all,
Unpanoplied, unpraised ; nor found a prince,
Or general, then, to answer for their crimes.
The hero's slaves, and all the scarlet troops
Of antichrist, and all that fought for rule,—
Many high-sounding names, familiar once
On earth, and praised exceedingly, but now
Familiar most in hell, their dungeon fit, 430
Where they may war eternally with God's
Almighty thunderbolts, and win them pangs
Of keener wo,—saw, as they sprung to life,
The widow and the orphan ready stand,
And helpless virgin, ravished in their sport,
To plead against them at the coming Doom.
The Roman legions, boasting once, how loud !
Of liberty, and fighting bravely o'er
The torrid and the frigid zone, the sands
Of burning Egypt, and the frozen hills 440
Of snowy Albion, to make mankind
Their thralls, untaught that he who made or kept
A slave could ne'er himself be truly free,—
That morning, gathered up their dust, which lay
Wide-scattered over half the globe ; nor saw
Their eagled banners then. Sennacherib's hosts,
Embattled once against the sons of God,
With insult bold, quick as the noise of mirth
And revelry, sunk in their drunken camp,
When death's dark angel, at the dead of night, 450

Their vitals touched, and made each pulse stand still,—
 Awoke in sorrow; and the multitudes
 Of Gog, and all the fated crew that warred
 Against the chosen saints, in the last days,
 At Armageddon, when the Lord came down,
 Mustering his host on Israel's holy hills
 And, from the treasures of his snow and hail,
 Rained terror, and confusion rained, and death,
 And gave to all the beasts, and fowls of heaven,
 Of captains' flesh, and blood of men of war, 460
 A feast of many days,—revived, and, doomed
 To second death, stood in Hamonah's vale.

Nor yet did all that fell in battle rise,
 That day, to wailing. Here and there were seen
 The patriot bands that from his guilty throne
 The despot tore, unshackled nations, made
 The prince respect the people's laws, drove back
 The wave of proud invasion, and rebuked
 The frantic fury of the multitude,
 Rebelled, and fought and fell for liberty 470
 Right understood, true heroes in the speech
 Of heaven, where words express the thoughts of him
 Who speaks; not undistinguished, these, though few,
 That morn, arose, with joy and melody.

All woke—the north and south gave up their dead.
 The caravan, that in mid-journey sunk,
 With all its merchandise, expected long,
 And long forgot, ingulfed beneath the tide
 Of death, that the wild Spirit of the winds
 Swept, in his wrath, along the wilderness, 480
 In the wide desert,—woke, and saw all calm
 Around, and populous with risen men;
 Nor of his relics thought the pilgrim then,
 Nor merchant of his silks and spiceries.

And he, far voyaging from home and friends,
 Too curious, with a mortal eye to peep
 Into the secrets of the Pole, forbid

By nature, whom fierce Winter seized, and froze
 To death, and wrapped in winding sheet of ice,
 And sung the requiem of his shivering ghost, 490
 With the loud organ of his mighty winds,
 And on his memory threw the snow of ages,—
 Felt the long-absent warmth of life return,
 And shook the frozen mountain from his bed.

All rose, of every age, of every clime.
 Adam and Eve, the great progenitors
 Of all mankind, fair as they seemed, that morn,
 When first they met in Paradise, unfallen,
 Uncursed,—from ancient slumber broke, where once
 Euphrates rolled his stream; and by them stood, 500
 In stature equal, and in soul as large,
 Their last posterity, though poets sung,
 And sages proved them far degenerate.

Blessed sight! not unobserved by angels, nor
 Unpraised,—that day, 'mong men of every tribe
 And hue, from those who drank of 'Tenglio's stream,
 To those who nightly saw the Hermit Cross,
 In utmost south retired,—rising, were seen
 The fair and ruddy sons of Albion's land, [510
 How glad!—not those who travelled far, and sailed,
 To purchase human flesh, or wreath the yoke
 Of vassalage on savage liberty;
 Or suck large fortune from the sweat of slaves;
 Or, with refined knavery, to cheat,
 Politely villanous, untutored men
 Out of their property; or gather shells,
 Intaglios rude, old pottery, and store
 Of mutilated gods of stone, and scraps
 Of barbarous epitaphs defaced, to be
 Among the learned the theme of warm debate, 520
 And infinite conjecture, sagely wrong!—
 But those, denied to self, to earthly fame
 Denied, and earthly wealth; who kindred left,
 And home, and ease, and all the cultured joys,
 Conveniences, and delicate delights,

Of ripe society ; in the great cause
 Of man's salvation greatly valorous,—
 The warriors of Messiah, messengers
 Of peace, and light, and life, whose eye, unscaled,
 Saw up the path of immortality, 530
 Far into bliss, saw men, immortal men,
 Wide wandering from the way ; eclipsed in night,
 Dark, moonless, moral night ; living like beasts,
 Like beasts descending to the grave, untaught
 Of life to come, unsanctified, unsaved ;
 Who, strong, though seeming weak ; who, warlike,
 though
 Unarmed with bow and sword ; appearing mad,
 Though sounder than the schools alone e'er made
 The doctor's head ; devote to God and truth,
 And sworn to man's eternal weal, beyond 540
 Repentance sworn, or thought of turning back ;
 And casting far behind all earthly care,
 All countryships, all national regards,
 And enmities, all narrow bourns of state
 And selfish policy ; beneath their feet
 Treading all fear of opposition down,
 All fear of danger, of reproach all fear,
 And evil tongues ;—went forth, from Britain went,
 A noiseless band of heavenly soldiery,
 From out the armoury of God equipped 550
 Invincible, to conquer sin, to blow
 The trump of freedom in the despot's ear,
 To tell the bruted slave his manhood high,
 His birthright liberty, and in his hand
 To put the writ of manumission, signed
 By God's own signature ; to drive away
 From earth the dark, infernal legionry
 Of superstition, ignorance, and hell ;
 High on the pagan hills, where Satan sat,
 Encamped, and o'er the subject kingdoms threw 560
 Perpetual night, to plant Immanuel's cross,
 The ensign of the Gospel, blazing round
 Immortal truth ; and, in the wilderness
 Of human waste, to sow eternal life ;

And from the rock, where Sin, with horrid yell,
 Devoured its victims unredeemed, to raise
 The melody of grateful hearts to Heaven :
 To falsehood, truth ; to pride, humility ;
 To insult, meekness ; pardon to revenge ;
 To stubborn prejudice, unwearied zeal ; 570
 To censure, unaccusing minds ; to stripes,
 Long suffering ; to want of all things, hope ;
 To death, assured faith of life to come ;—
 Opposing. These great worthies, rising, shone
 Through all the tribes and nations of mankind,
 Like Hesper, glorious once among the stars
 Of twilight, and around them, flocking, stood,
 Arrayed in white, the people they had saved.

Great Ocean ! too, that morning, thou the call
 Of restitution heardst, and reverently 580
 To the last trumpet's voice, in silence, listened.
 Great Ocean ! strongest of creation's sons,
 Unconquerable, unreposed, untired,
 That rolled the wild, profound, eternal bass,
 In Nature's anthem, and made music, such
 As pleased the ear of God ! original,
 Unmarred, unfaded work of Deity,
 And unburlesqued by mortal's puny skill,
 From age to age enduring and unchanged,
 Majestical, inimitable, vast, 590
 Loud uttering satire, day and night, on each
 Succeeding race, and little pompous work
 Of man !—unfallen, religious, holy Sea !
 Thou bowedst thy glorious head to none, fearedst none,
 Heardst none, to none didst honour, but to God
 Thy Maker, only worthy to receive
 Thy great obeisance ! Undiscovered Sea !
 Into thy dark, unknown, mysterious caves,
 And secret haunts, unfathomably deep
 Beneath all visible retired, none went, 600
 And came again, to tell the wonders there.
 Tremendous Sea ! what time thou lifted up
 Thy waves on high, and with thy winds and storms

Strange pastime took, and shook thy mighty sides
 Indignantly,—the pride of navies fell ;
 Beyond the arm of help, unheard, unseen,
 Sunk friend and foe, with all their wealth and war ;
 And on thy shores, men of a thousand tribes,
 Polite and barbarous, trembling stood, amazed,
 Confounded, terrified, and thought vast thoughts 610
 Of ruin, boundlessness, omnipotence,
 Infinitude, eternity ; and thought
 And wondered still, and grasped, and grasped, and
 grasped
 Again ; beyond her reach, exerting all
 The soul, to take thy great idea in,
 To comprehend incomprehensible ;
 And wondered more, and felt their littleness,
 Self-purifying, unpolluted Sea !
 Lover unchangeable, thy faithful breast
 For ever heaving to the lovely Moon, 620
 That, like a shy and holy virgin, robed
 In saintly white, walked nightly in the heavens,
 And to the everlasting serenade
 Gave gracious audience ; nor was wooed in vain.
 That morning, thou, that slumbered not before,
 Nor slept, great Ocean ! laid thy waves to rest,
 And hushed thy mighty minstrelsy. No breath
 Thy deep composure stirred, no fin, no oar ;
 Like beauty newly dead, so calm, so still,
 So lovely, thou, beneath the light that fell 630
 From angel-chariots, sentinelled on high,
 Reposed, and listened, and saw thy living change,
 Thy dead arise. Charybdis listened, and Scylla ;
 And savage Euxine, on the Thracian beach,
 Lay motionless : and every battle-ship
 Stood still, and every ship of merchandise,
 And all that sailed, of every name, stood still.
 Even as the ship of war, full-fledged, and swift,
 Like some fierce bird of prey, bore on her foe,
 Opposing with as fell intent, the wind 640
 Fell withered from her wings that idly hung ;
 The stormy bullet, by the cannon thrown

Uncivilly against the heavenly face
Of men, half sped, sunk harmlessly, and all
Her loud, uncircumcised, tempestuous crew,
How ill prepared to meet their God ! were changed,
Unchangeable—the pilot at the helm
Was changed, and the rough captain, while he mouthed
The huge, enormous oath. The fisherman,
That in his boat, expectant, watched his lines, 650
Or mended on the shore his net, and sung,
Happy in thoughtlessness, some careless air,
Heard Time depart, and felt the sudden change.
In solitary deep, far out from land,
Or steering from the port with many a cheer,
Or while returning from long voyage, fraught
With lusty wealth, rejoicing to have escaped
The dangerous main, and plagues of foreign climes,—
The merchant quaffed his native air, refreshed ;
And saw his native hills, in the sun's light, 660
Serenely rise ; and thought of meetings glad,
And many days of ease and honour, spent
Among his friends—unwarned man ! even then,
The knell of Time broke on his reverie,
And, in the twinkling of an eye, his hopes,
All earthly, perished all. As sudden rose,
From out their watery beds, the Ocean's dead,
Renewed ; and, on the unstirring billows, stood
From pole to pole, thick covering all the sea—
Of every nation blent, and every age. 670

Wherever slept one grain of human dust,
Essential organ of a human soul,
Wherever tossed, obedient to the call
Of God's omnipotence, it hurried on
To meet its fellow particles, revived,
Rebuilt, in union indestructible.
No atom of his spoils remained to Death.
From his strong arm, by stronger arm released,
Immortal now in soul and body both,
Beyond his reach, stood all the sons of men, 680
And saw, behind, his valley lie, unfear'd.

O Death ! with what an eye of desperate lust,
From out thy emptied vaults, thou then didst look
After the risen multitudes of all
Mankind ! Ah ! thou hadst been the terror long,
And murderer, of all of woman born.
None could escape thee ! In thy dungeon house,
Where darkness dwelt, and putrid loathsomeness,
And fearful silence, villanously still,
And all of horrible and deadly name,— 690
Thou satst, from age to age, insatiate,
And drank the blood of men, and gorged their flesh,
And with thy iron teeth didst grind their bones
To powder, treading out, beneath thy feet,
Their very names and memories. The blood
Of nations could not slake thy parched throat.
No bribe could buy thy favour for an hour,
Or mitigate thy ever-cruel rage
For human prey. Gold, beauty, virtue, youth,
Even helpless, swaddled innocency, failed 700
To soften thy heart of stone ! the infant's blood
Pleased well thy taste, and, while the mother wept,
Bereaved by thee, lonely and waste in wo,
Thy ever-grinding jaws devoured her too.

Each son of Adam's family beheld,
Where'er he turned, whatever path of life
He trode, thy goblin form before him stand,
Like trusty old assassin, in his aim
Steady and sure as eye of destiny,
With sithe, and dart, and strength invincible, 710
Equipped, and ever menacing his life.
He turned aside, he drowned himself in sleep,
In wine, in pleasure ; travelled, voyaged, sought
Receipts for health from all he met ; betook
To business, speculate, retired ; returned
Again to active life, again retired ;
Returned, retired again ; prepared to die,
Talked of thy nothingness, conversed of life
To come, laughed at his fears, filled up the cup,
Drank deep, refrained ; filled up, refrained again ; 720

Planned, built him round with splendour, won applause,
Made large alliances with men and things,
Read deep in science and philosophy,
To fortify his soul ; heard lectures prove
The present ill, and future good ; observed
His pulse beat regular, extended hope ;
Thought, dissipated thought, and thought again ;
Indulged, abstained, and tried a thousand schemes,
To ward thy blow, or hide thee from his eye ;
But still thy gloomy terrors, dipped in sin, 730
Before him frowned, and withered all his joy.
Still, feared and hated thing ! thy ghostly shape
Stood in his avenues of fairest hope ;
Unmannerly and uninvited, crept
Into his haunts of most select delight.
Still, on his halls of mirth, and banqueting,
And revelry, thy shadowy hand was seen
Writing thy name of—Death. Vile worm, that gnawed
The root of all his happiness terrene, the gall
Of all his sweet, the thorn of every rose 740
Of earthly bloom, cloud of his noon day sky,
Frost of his spring, sigh of his loudest laugh,
Dark spot on every form of loveliness,
Rank smell amidst his rarest spiceries,
Harsh dissonance of all his harmony,
Reserve of every promise, and the if
Of all to-morrows !—now, beyond thy vale,
Stood all the ransomed multitude of men,
Immortal all : and, in their visions, saw
Thy visage grim no more. Great payment day ! 750
Of all thou ever conquered, none was left
In thy unpeopled realms, so populous once.
He, at whose girdle hang the keys of death,
And life, not bought but with the blood of Him
Who wears, the eternal Son of God, that morn,
Dispelled the cloud that sat so long, so thick,
So heavy o'er thy vale ; opened all thy doors,
Unopened before ; and set thy prisoners free.
Vain was resistance, and to follow vain.
In thy unveiled caves, and solitudes 760

Of dark and dismal emptiness, thou satst,
 Rolling thy hollow eyes, disabled thing!
 Helpless, despised, unpitied, and unfear'd,
 Like some fallen tyrant, chained in sight of all
 The people ; from thee dropped thy pointless dart,
 Thy terrors withered all, thy ministers,
 Annihilated, fell before thy face,
 And on thy maw eternal Hunger seized.

Nor yet, sad monster ! wast thou left alone.
 In thy dark dens some phantoms still remained,— 770
 Ambition, Vanity, and earthly Fame,
 Swollen Ostentation, meagre Avarice,
 Mad Superstition, smooth Hypocrisy,
 And Bigotry intolerant, and Fraud,
 And wilful Ignorance, and sullen Pride,
 Hot Controversy, and the subtle ghost
 Of vain Philosophy, and worldly Hope,
 And sweet-lipped, hollow-hearted Flattery.
 All these, great personages once on earth,
 And not unfollowed, nor unpraised, were left, 780
 Thy ever-unredeemed, and with thee driven
 To Erebus, through whose uncheered wastes,
 Thou mayest chase them, with thy broken sithe
 Fetching vain strokes, to all eternity,
 Unsatisfied, as men who, in the days
 Of Time, their unsubstantial forms pursued.

COURSE OF TIME.

Book VIII.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK VIII.

The Bard describes the appearance of the vast Assembly of men gathered for the Final Judgment.

All were divested of the extraneous circumstances by which they were distinguished in life, each retaining simply his moral character. Various classes in the assembly are particularized ; the lover of fame, the logician, the recluse, the bigot, the indolent, the sceptic, the dupe of fashion, the unforgiving parent, the seducer, the dishonest judge and advocate, the liar, duellist, suicide, hypocrite, the slanderer, the ungodly minister, the man of envy.

When the Bard has named these classes, and presented their character, and their feelings in the awful Assembly, the Spirit whose inquiries had given occasion for the Bard's communications, asks whether any of the several classes of the unholy ever actually believed themselves advancing to a future Bar of Judgment. The answer is given that they did not. The word of God was properly and perfectly believed by none of them ; the necessary and certain fruit of faith being obedience and holiness.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book VXXX.

REANIMATED, now, and dressed in robes
Of everlasting wear, in the last pause
Of expectation, stood the human race,
Buoyant in air, or covering shore and sea,
From east to west, thick as the eared grain,
In golden autumn waved, from field to field,
Profuse, by Nilus' fertile wave, while yet
Earth was, and men were in her valleys seen.

Still, all was calm in heaven. Nor yet appeared [10
The Judge, nor aught appeared, save here and there,
On wing of golden plumage borne at will,
A curious angel, that from out the skies
Now glanced a look on man, and then retired.
As calm was all on earth. The ministers
Of God's unsparing vengeance, waited, still
Unbid. No sun, no moon, no star, gave light.
A blessed and holy radiance, travelled far
From day original, fell on the face
Of men, and every countenance revealed;
Unpleasant to the bad, whose visages
Had lost all guise of seeming happiness,
With which on earth such pains they took to hide

Their misery in. On their grim features, now
 The plain, unvisored index of the soul,
 The true, untampered witness of the heart,
 No smile of hope, no look of vanity
 Beseeching for applause, was seen ; no scowl
 Of self-important, all-despising pride,
 That once upon the poor and needy fell,
 Like winter on the unprotected flower, 30
 Withering their very being to decay.
 No jesting mirth, no wanton leer, was seen,
 No sullen lower of braggart fortitude
 Defying pain, nor anger, nor revenge ;
 But fear instead, and terror, and remorse ;
 And chief, one passion, to its answering, shaped
 The features of the damned, and in itself
 Summed all the rest,—unutterable despair.

What on the righteous shone of foreign light,
 Was all redundant day, they needed not. 40
 For as, by nature, Sin is dark, and loves
 The dark, still hiding from itself in gloom,
 And in the darkest hell is still itself
 The darkest hell, and the severest wo,
 Where all is wo ; so Virtue, ever fair !
 Both by a sympathy as strong as binds
 Two equal hearts, well pleased in wedded love,
 For ever seek the light, for ever seek
 All fair and lovely things, all beauteous forms,
 All images of excellence and truth ; 50
 And from her own essential being, pure
 As flows the fount of life that spirits drink,
 Death to herself give light, nor from her beams,
 As native to her as her own existence,
 Can be divorced, nor of her glory shorn,—
 Which now, from every feature of the just,
 Divinely rayed, yet not from all alike ;
 In measure, equal to the soul's advance
 In virtue, was the lustre of the face.

It was a strange assembly : none, of all
 That congregation vast, could recollect

Aught like it in the history of man.
 No badge of outward state was seen, no mark
 Of age, or rank, or national attire,
 Or robe professional, or air of trade.
 Untitled, stood the man that once was called
 My lord, unserved, unfollowed ; and the man
 Of tithes, right reverend in the dialect
 Of Time addressed, ungowned, unbeneficed,
 Uncorpulent ; nor now, from him who bore, 70
 With ceremonious gravity of step,
 And face of borrowed holiness o'erlaid,
 The ponderous book before the awful priest,
 And opened and shut the pulpit's sacred gates
 In style of wonderful observancy
 And reverence excessive, in the beams
 Of sacerdotal splendour lost, or if
 Observed, comparison ridiculous scarce
 Could save the little, pompous, humble man 80
 From laughter of the people,—not from him
 Could be distinguished then the priest untithed.
 None levees held, those marts where princely smiles
 Were sold for flattery, and obeisance mean,
 Unfit from man to man ; none came or went,
 None wished to draw attention, none was poor,
 None rich, none young, none old, deformed none ;
 None sought for place or favour, none had aught
 To give, none could receive, none ruled, none served ;
 No king, no subject was ; unscutcheoned all,
 Uncrowned, unplumed, unhelmed, unpedigreed, 90
 Unlaced, uncoroneted, unbestarred.
 Nor countryman was seen, nor citizen ;
 Republican, nor humble advocate
 Of monarchy ; nor idol worshipper,
 Nor beaded papist, nor Mahometan ;
 Episcopalian none, nor presbyter ;
 Nor Lutheran, nor Calvinist, nor Jew,
 Nor Greek, nor sectary of any name.
 Nor, of those persons, that loud title bore,
 Most high and mighty, most magnificent, 100
 Most potent, most august, most worshipful,

Most eminent, words of great pomp, that pleased
The ear of vanity, and made the worms
Of earth mistake themselves for gods,—could one
Be seen, to claim these phrases obsolete.

It was a congregation vast of men,
Of unappendaged and unvarnished men,
Of plain, unceremonious human beings,
Of all but moral character bereaved.
His vice or virtue, now, to each remained, 110
Alone. All else, with their grave-clothes, men had
Put off, as badges worn by mortal, not
Immortal man ; alloy that could not pass
The scrutiny of Death's refining fires ;
Dust of Time's wheels, by multitudes pursued
Of fools that shouted—Gold ! fair painted fruit,
At which the ambitious idiot jumped, while men
Of wiser mood immortal harvest reaped ;
Weeds of the human garden, sprung from earth's
Adulterate soil, unfit to be transplanted, 120
Though by the moral botanist, too oft,
For plants of heavenly seed mistaken and nursed,
Mere chaff, that Virtue, when she rose from earth,
And waved her wings to gain her native heights,
Drove from the verge of being, leaving Vice
No mask to hide her in ; base-born of Time,
In which God claimed no property, nor had
Prepared for them a place in heaven or hell.
Yet did these vain distinctions, now forgot,
Bulk largely in the filmy eye of Time, 130
And were exceeding fair, and lured to death
Immortal souls. But they were passed, for all
Ideal now was passed ; reality
A lone remained ; and good and bad, redeemed
And unredeemed, distinguished sole the sons
Of men. Each, to his proper self reduced,
And undisguised, was what his seeming showed.

The man of earthly fame, whom common men
Made boast of having seen, who scarce could pass

The ways of Time, for eager crowds that pressed 140
 To do him homage, and pursued his ear
 With endless praise, for deeds unpraised above,
 And yoked their brutal natures, honoured much
 To drag his chariot on,—unnoticed stood,
 With none to praise him, none to flatter there.

Blushing and dumb, that morning, too, was seen
 The mighty reasoner, he who deeply searched
 The origin of things, and talked of good
 And evil, much, of causes and effects,
 Of mind and matter, contradicting all 150
 That went before him, and himself, the while,
 The laughing-stock of angels; diving far
 Below his depth, to fetch reluctant proof,
 That he himself was mad and wicked too,
 When, proud and ignorant man, he meant to prove
 That God had made the universe amiss,
 And sketched a better plan. Ah! foolish sage!
 He could not trust the word of Heaven, nor see
 The light which from the Bible blazed,—that lamp
 Which God threw from his palace down to earth, 160
 To guide his wandering children home,—yet leaned
 His cautious faith on speculations wild,
 And visionary theories absurd,
 Prodigiously, deliriously absurd,
 Compared with which, the most erroneous flight
 That poet ever took when warm with wine,
 Was moderate conjecturing: he saw,
 Weighed in the balance of eternity,
 His lore how light, and wished, too late, that he
 Had staid at home, and learned to know himself, 170
 And done, what peasants did, disputed less,
 And more obeyed. Nor less he grieved his time
 Misspent, the man of curious research,
 Who travelled far through lands of hostile clime
 And dangerous inhabitant, to fix
 The bounds of empires passed, and ascertain
 The burial-place of heroes, never born;
 Despising present things, and future too,

And groping in the dark unsearchable
Of finished years,—by dreary ruins seen, 180
And dungeons damp, and vaults of ancient waste,
With spade and mattock, delving deep to raise
Old vases and dismembered idols rude ;
With matchless perseverance, spelling out
Words without sense. Poor man! he clapped his
hands,
Enraptured, when he found a manuscript
That spoke of pagan gods ; and yet forgot
'The God' who made the sea and sky, alas !
Forgot that trifling was a sin ; stored much
Of dubious stuff, but laid no treasure up 190
In heaven ; on mouldered columns scratched his name,
But ne'er inscribed it in the book of life.

Unprofitable seemed, and unapproved,
That day, the sullen, self-vindictive life
Of the recluse. With crucifixes hung,
And spells, and rosaries, and wooden saints,
Like one of reason reft, he journeyed forth,
In show of miserable poverty.
And chose to beg,—as if to live on sweat
Of other men, had promised great reward ; 200
On his own flesh inflicted cruel wounds,
With naked foot embraced the ice, by the hour
Said mass, and did most grievous penance vile ;
And then retired to drink the filthy cup
Of secret wickedness, and fabricate
All lying wonders, by the untaught received
For revelations new. Deluded wretch !
Did he not know, that the most Holy One
Required a cheerful life and holy heart?

Most disappointed in that crowd of men, 210
The man of subtle controversy stood,
The bigot theologian, in minute
Distinctions skilled, and doctrines un-reduced
To practice ; in debate how loud ! how long !
How dexterous ' in Christian love how cold !

His vain conceits were orthodox alone.
The immutable and heavenly truth, revealed
By God, was naught to him. He had an art,
A kind of hellish charm, that made the lips
Of truth speak falsehood, to his liking turned 220
The meaning of the text, made trifles seem
The marrow of salvation ; to a word,
A name, a sect, that sounded in the ear,
And to the eye so many letters showed,
But did no more,—gave value infinite ;
Proved still his reasoning best, and his belief,
Though propped on fancies wild as madmen's dreams,
Most rational, most scriptural, most sound ;
With mortal heresy denouncing all
Who in his arguments could see no force. 230
On points of faith, too fine for human sight,
And never understood in heaven, he placed
His everlasting hope, undoubting placed,
And died ; and, when he opened his ear, prepared
To hear, beyond the grave, the minstrelsy
Of bliss, he heard, alas ! the wail of wo.
He proved all creeds false but his own, and found,
At last, his own most false—most false, because
He spent his time to prove all others so.

O love-destroying, cursed Bigotry ! 240
Cursed in heaven, but cursed more in hell,
Where millions curse thee, and must ever curse !
Religion's most abhorred ! perdition's most
Forlorn ! God's most abandoned ! hell's most damned !
The infidel, who turned his impious war
Against the walls of Zion, on the rock
Of ages built, and higher than the clouds,
Sinned, and received his due reward ; but she
Within her walls sinned more. Of Ignorance
Begot, her daughter, Persecution, walked 350
The earth, from age to age, and drank the blood
Of saints, with horrid relish drank the blood
Of God's peculiar children, and was drunk,
And in her drunkenness dreamed of doing good.

The supplicating hand of innocence,
 That made the tiger mild, and in his wrath
 The lion pause, the groans of suffering most
 Severe, were naught to her, she laughed at groans.
 No music pleased her more, and no repast
 So sweet to her, as blood of men redeemed 264
 By blood of Christ. Ambition's self, though mad,
 And nursed on human gore, with her compared,
 Was merciful. Nor did she always rage.
 She had some hours of meditation, set
 Apart, wherein she to her study went,
 The Inquisition, model most complete
 Of perfect wickedness, where deeds were done,—
 Deeds ! let them ne'er be named,—and sat and planned
 Deliberately, and with most musing pains,
 How, to extremest thrill of agony, 270
 The flesh, and blood, and souls of holy men,
 Her victims, might be wrought ; and when she saw
 New tortures of her labouring fancy born,
 She leaped for joy, and made great haste to try
 Their force—well pleased to hear a deeper groan

But now her day of mirth was passed, and come
 Her day to weep, her day of bitter groans,
 And sorrow unbemoaned, the day of grief
 And wrath retributory poured in full
 On all that took her part. The man of sin, 280
 The mystery of iniquity, her friend
 Sincere, who pardoned sin, unpardoned still,
 And in the name of God blasphemed, and did
 All wicked, all abominable things,
 Most abject stood, that day, by devils hissed,
 And by the looks of those he murdered, scorched ;
 And plagued with inward shame, that on his cheek
 Burned, while his votaries, who left the earth,
 Secure of bliss, around him, undeceived,
 Stood, undeceivable till then ; and knew, 290
 Too late, him fallible, themselves accursed,
 And all their passports and certificates,
 A lie : nor disappointed more, nor more

Ashamed, the Mussulman, when he saw, gnash
 His teeth and wail, whom he expected judge.
 All these were damned for bigotry, were damned,
 Because they thought, that they alone served God,
 And served him most, when most they disobeyed.

Of those forlorn and sad, thou mightst have marked,
 In number most innumerable, stand 300
 The indolent ; too lazy these to make
 Inquiry for themselves, they stuck their faith
 To some well-fatted priest, with offerings bribed
 To bring them oracles of peace, and take
 Into his management all the concerns
 Of their eternity ; managed how well
 They knew, that day, and might have sooner known,
 That the commandment was, Search, and believe
 In Me, and not in man ; who leans on him
 Leans on a broken reed, that will impierce 310
 The trusted side. I am the way, the truth,
 The life, alone, and there is none besides.

This did they read, and yet refused to search,
 To search what easily was found, and, found,
 Of price uncountable. Most foolish, they
 Thought God with ignorance pleased, and blinded faith,
 That took not root in reason, purified
 With holy influence of his Spirit pure
 So, on they walked, and stumbled in the light
 Of noon, because they would not open their eyes ; 320
 Effect how sad of sloth ! that made them risk
 Their piloting to the eternal shore,
 To one who could mistake the lurid flash
 Of hell for heaven's true star, rather than bow
 The knee, and by one fervent word obtain
 His guidance sure, who calls the stars by name.
 They prayed by proxy, and at second hand
 Believed, and slept, and put repentance off,
 Until the knock of death awoke them, when
 They saw their ignorance both, and him they paid 230
 To bargain of their souls 'twixt them and God,

Fled, and began repentance without end.
 How did they wish, that morning, as they stood
 With blushing covered, they had for themselves
 The Scripture searched, had for themselves believed,
 And made acquaintance with the Judge ere then !

Great day of termination to the joys
 Of sin ! to joys that grew on mortal boughs,
 On trees whose seed fell not from heaven, whose top
 Reached not above the clouds. From such, alone, 340
 The epicure took all his meals. In choice
 Of morsels for the body, nice he was,
 And scrupulous, and knew all wines by smell
 Or taste, and every composition knew
 Of cookery ; but grossly drank, unskilled,
 The cup of spiritual pollution up,
 That sickened his soul to death, while yet his eyes
 Stood out with fat. His feelings were his guide.
 He ate, and drank, and slept, and took all joys,
 Forbid and unforbid, as impulse urged 350
 Or appetite, nor asked his reason why.
 He said, he followed Nature still, but lied ;
 For she was temperate and chaste, he full
 Of wine and all adultery ; her face
 Was holy, most unholy his ; her eye
 Was pure, his shot unhallowed fire ; her lips
 Sang praise to God, his uttered oaths profane ;
 Her breath was sweet, his rank with foul debauch ;
 Yet pleaded he a kind and feeling heart,
 Even when he left a neighbour's bed defiled. 360
 Like migratory fowls, that flocking sailed
 From isle to isle, steering by sense alone,
 Whither the clime their liking best beseeemed ;
 So he was guided, so he moved through good
 And evil, right and wrong, but, ah ! to fate
 All different : they slept in dust, unpained ;
 He rose, that day, to suffer endless pain.

Cured of his unbelief, the sceptic stood,
 Who doubted of his being while he breathed,

Than whom glossography itself, that spoke 370
 Huge folios of nonsense every hour,
 And left, surrounding every page, its marks
 Of prodigal stupidity, scarce more
 Of folly raved. The tyrant too, who sat
 In grisly council, like a spider couched,
 With ministers of locust countenance,
 And made alliances to rob mankind,
 And holy termed,—for still, beneath a name
 Of pious sound, the wicked sought to veil
 Their crimes,—forgetful of his right divine, 380
 Trembled, and owned oppression was of hell;
 Nor did the uncivil robber, who unpursed
 The traveller on the high-way, and cut
 His throat, anticipate severer doom.

In that assembly there was one, who, while
 Beneath the sun, aspired to be a fool;
 In different ages known by different names,
 Not worth repeating here. Be this enough,
 With scrupulous care exact, he walked the rounds 390
 Of fashionable duty, laughed when sad;
 When merry, wept; deceiving, was deceived;
 And flattering, flattered. Fashion was his god.
 Obsequiously he fell before its shrine,
 In slavish plight, and trembled to offend.
 If graveness suited, he was grave; if else,
 He travailed sorely, and made brief repose,
 To work the proper quantity of sin.
 In all submissive, to its changing shape,
 Still changing, girded he his vexed frame,
 And laughter made to men of sounder head. 400
 Most circumspect he was of bows, and nods,
 And salutations; and most seriously
 And deeply meditated he of dress;
 And in his dreams saw lace and ribbons fly.
 His soul was naught; he damned it, every day,
 Unceremoniously. Oh! fool of fools!
 Pleased with a painted smile, he fluttered on,
 Like fly of gaudy plume, by fashion driven,

As faded leaves by Autumn's wind, till Death
 Put forth his hand, and drew him out of sight. 410
 Oh! fool of fools! polite to man; to God
 Most rude; yet had he many rivals, who,
 Age after age, great striving made to be
 Ridiculous, and to forget they had
 Immortal souls, that day remembered well.

As rueful stood his other half, as wan
 Of cheek. Small her ambition was, but strange.
 The distaff, needle, all domestic cares,
 Religion, children, husband, home, were things
 She could not bear the thought of, bitter drugs 420
 That sickened her soul. The house of wanton mirth
 And revelry, the mask, the dance, she loved,
 And in their service soul and body spent
 Most cheerfully. A little admiration,
 Or true or false, no matter which, pleased her.
 And o'er the wreck of fortune lost, and health
 And peace, and an eternity of bliss
 Lost, made her sweetly smile. She was convinced,
 That God had made her greatly out of taste;
 And took much pains to make herself anew. 430
 Bedaubed with paint, and hung with ornaments
 Of curious selection, gaudy toy!
 A show unpaid for, paying to be seen!
 As beggar by the way, most humbly asking
 The alms of public gaze,—she went abroad.
 Folly admired, and indication gave
 Of envy, cold Civility made bows
 And smoothly flattered; Wisdom shook his head,
 And Laughter shaped his lip into a smile;
 Sobriety did stare, Forethought grew pale, 440
 And Modesty hung down the head and blushed,
 And Pity wept, as, on the frothy surge
 Of fashion tossed, she passed them by, like sail
 Before some devilish blast, and got no time
 To think, and never thought, till on the rock
 She dashed, of ruin, anguish, and despair.

O how unlike this giddy thing in Time !
 And at the day of judgment how unlike,
 The modest, meek, retiring dame ! Her house
 Was ordered well, her children taught the way 450
 Of life, who, rising up in honour, called
 Her blessed. Best pleased to be admired at home,
 And hear, reflected from her husband's praise,
 Her own, she sought no gaze of foreign eye ;
 His praise alone, and faithful love, and trust
 Reposed, was happiness enough for her.
 Yet who, that saw her pass, and heard the poor
 With earnest benedictions on her steps
 Attend, could from obeisance keep his eye,
 Or tongue from due applause ? In virtue fair, 460
 Adorned with modesty, and matron grace
 Unspeakable, and love, her face was like
 The light, most welcome to the eye of man,
 Refreshing most, most honoured, most desired,
 Of all he saw in the dim world below.
 As Morning when she shed her golden locks,
 And on the dewy top of Hermon walked,
 Or Zion hill ; so glorious was her path.
 Old men beheld, and did her reverence,
 And bade their daughters look, and take from her 470
 Example of their future life ; the young
 Admired, and new resolve of virtue made.
 And none who was her husband asked ; his air
 Serene, and countenance of joy, the sign
 Of inward satisfaction, as he passed
 The crowd, or sat among the elders, told.
 In holiness complete, and in the robes
 Of saving righteousness, arrayed for heaven,
 How fair, that day, among the fair, she stood !
 How lovely on the eternal hills her steps ! 480

Restored to reason, on that morn, appeared
 The lunatic, who raved in chains, and asked
 No mercy when he died. Of lunacy,
 Innumerable were the causes ; humbled pride,
 Ambition disappointed, riches lost,

And bodily disease, and sorrow, oft
 By man inflicted on his brother man ;
 Sorrow that made the reason drunk, and yet
 Left much untasted—so the cup was filled ;
 Sorrow that, like an ocean, dark, deep, rough, 490
 And shoreless, rolled its billows o'er the soul
 Perpetually, and without hope of end.

Take one example, one of female wo.
 Loved by a father and a mother's love,
 In rural peace she lived, so fair, so light
 Of heart, so good, and young, that reason, scarce,
 The eye could credit, but would doubt, as she
 Did stoop to pull the lily or the rose
 From morning's dew, if it reality
 Of flesh and blood, or holy vision, saw, 500
 In imagery of perfect womanhood.
 But short her bloom, her happiness was short.
 One saw her loveliness, and, with desire
 Unhallowed, burning, to her ear addressed
 Dishonest words: " Her favour was his life,
 His heaven ; her frown his wo, his night, his death.
 With turgid phrase, thus wove in flattery's loom,
 He on her womanish nature won, and age
 Suspicionless, and ruined, and forsook.
 For he a chosen villain was at heart, 510
 And capable of deeds that durst not seek
 Repentance. Soon her father saw her shame,
 His heart grew stone, he drove her forth to want
 And wintry winds, and with a horrid curse
 Pursued her ear, forbidding all return.

Upon a hoary cliff, that watched the sea,
 Her babe was found—dead. On its little cheek,
 The tear that nature bade it weep, had turned
 An ice-drop, sparkling in the morning beam ;
 And to the turf its helpless hands were frozen. 520
 For she, the woful mother, had gone mad,
 And laid it down, regardless of its fate,
 And of her own. Yet had she many days

Of sorrow in the world, but never wept.
 She lived on alms, and carried in her hand
 Some withered stalks she gathered in the spring.
 When any asked the cause, she smiled and said,
 They were her sisters, and would come and watch
 Her grave when she was dead. She never spoke
 Of her deceiver, father, mother, home, 530
 Or child, or heaven, or hell, or God, but still
 In lonely places walked, and ever gazed
 Upon the withered stalks, and talked to them ;
 Till, wasted to the shadow of her youth,
 With wo too wide to see beyond, she died—
 Not unatoned for by imputed blood,
 Nor by the Spirit, that mysterious works,
 Unsanctified. Aloud, her father cursed,
 That day, his guilty pride, which would not own
 A daughter, whom the God of heaven and earth 540
 Was not ashamed to call his own ; and he,
 Who ruined her, read from her holy book, .
 That pierced him with perdition manifold,
 His sentence, burning with vindictive fire

The judge that took a bribe ; he who amiss
 Pledged the widow's cause, and by delay
 Delaying ever, made the law at night
 More intricate than at the dawn, and on
 The morrow farther from a close, than when
 The sun last set, till he who in the suit 550
 Was poorest, by his emptied coffers, proved
 His cause the worst ; and he that had the bag
 Of weights deceitful, and the balance false ;
 And he that with a fraudulent lip deceived
 In buying or in selling ;—these, that morn,
 Found custom no excuse for sin, and knew
 Plain dealing was a virtue, but too late.
 And he that was supposed to do nor good
 Nor ill, surprised, could find no neutral ground,
 And learned, that to do nothing was to serve 560
 The devil, and transgress the laws of God.
 The noisy quack, that by profession lied,

And uttered falsehoods of enormous size,
 With countenance as grave as truth beseeemed ;
 And he that lied for pleasure, whom a lust
 Of being heard and making people stare,
 And a most steadfast hate of silence, drove
 Far wide of sacred truth, who never took
 The pains to think of what he was to say,
 But still made haste to speak, with weary tongue, 570
 Like copious stream for ever flowing on ;—
 Read clearly in the lettered heavens, what, long
 Before, they might have read, For every word
 Of folly, you, this day, shall give account ;
 And every liar shall his portion have
 Among the cursed, without the gates of life.

With groans that made no pause, lamenting there
 Were seen the duellist and suicide.
 This thought, but thought amiss, that of himself
 He was entire proprietor ; and so, 580
 When he was tired of Time, with his own hand,
 He opened the portals of Eternity,
 And sooner than the devils hoped, arrived
 In hell. The other, of resentment quick,
 And, for a word, a look, a gesture, deemed
 Not scrupulously exact in all respect,
 Prompt to revenge, went to the cited field,
 For double murder armed, his own, and his
 That as himself he was ordained to love.
 The first, in pagan books of early times, 590
 Was heroism pronounced, and greatly praised.
 In fashion's glossary of later days,
 The last was honour called, and spirit high.
 Alas ! 'twas mortal spirit, honour which
 Forgot to wake at the last trumpet's voice
 Bearing the signature of Time alone,
 Uncurrent in Eternity, and base.
 Wise men suspected this before ; for they
 Could never understand what honour meant,
 Or why that should be honour termed, which made 600
 Man murder man, and broke the laws of God

Most wantonly. Sometimes, indeed, the grave,
 And those of Christian creed imagined, spoke
 Admiringly of honour, lauding much
 The noble youth, who, after many rounds
 Of boxing, died ; or, to the pistol shot
 His breast exposed, his soul to endless pain.
 But they who most admired, and understood
 This honour best, and on its altar laid
 Their lives, most obviously were fools ; and, what 610
 Fools only, and the wicked, understood,
 The wise agreed was some delusive Shade,
 That with the mist of time should disappear.

Great day of revelation ! in the grave
 The hypocrite had left his mask, and stood
 In naked ugliness. He was a man
 Who stole the livery of the court of heaven,
 To serve the devil in ; in virtue's guise,
 Devoured the widow's house and orphan's bread ;
 In holy phrase, transacted villanies 620
 That common sinners durst not meddle with.
 At sacred feast, he sat among the saints,
 And with his guilty hands touched holiest things,
 And none of sin lamented more, or sighed
 More deeply, or with graver countenance,
 Or longer prayer, wept o'er the dying man,
 Whose infant children, at the moment, he
 Planned how to rob. In sermon style he bought,
 And sold, and lied ; and salutations made
 In scripture terms. He prayed by quantity, 630
 And with his repetitions long and loud,
 All knees were weary. With one hand he put
 A penny in the urn of poverty,
 And with the other took a shilling out.
 On charitable lists,—those trumps which told
 The public ear, who had in secret done
 The poor a benefit, and half the alms
 They told of, took themselves to keep them sounding,—
 He blazed his name, more pleased to have it there
 Than in the book of life. Seest thou the man ! 640

A serpent with an angel's voice ! a grave
 With flowers bestrewed ! and yet few were deceived.
 His virtues being over-done, his face
 Too grave, his prayers too long, his charities
 Too pompously attended, and his speech
 Larded too frequently and out of time
 With serious phraseology,—were rents
 That in his garments opened in spite of him,
 Through which the well-accustomed eye could see
 The rottenness of his heart. None deeper blushed, 650
 As in the all-piercing light he stood, exposed,
 No longer herding with the holy ones.
 Yet still he tried to bring his countenance
 To sanctimonious seeming ; but, meanwhile,
 The shame within, now visible to all,
 His purpose balked. The righteous smiled, and even
 Despair itself some signs of laughter gave,
 As ineffectually he strove to wipe
 His brow, that inward guiltiness defiled.
 Detected wretch ! of all the reprobate, 660
 None seemed maturer for the flames of hell,
 Where still his face, from ancient custom, wears
 A holy air which says to all that pass
 Him by, " I was a hypocrite on earth."

That was the hour which measured out to each,
 Impartially, his share of reputation,
 Correcting all mistakes, and from the name
 Of the good man all slanders wiping off.
 Good name was dear to all. Without it, none 670
 Could soundly sleep, even on a royal bed,
 Or drink with relish from a cup of gold ;
 And with it, on his borrowed straw, or by
 The leafless hedge, beneath the open heavens,
 The weary beggar took untroubled rest
 It was a music of most heavenly tone,
 To which the heart leaped joyfully, and all
 The spirits danced. For honest fame, men laid
 Their heads upon the block, and, while the axe
 Descended, looked and smiled. It was of price

Invaluable. Riches, health, repose, 680
 Whole kingdoms, life, were given for it, and he
 Who got it was the winner still; and he
 Who sold it durst not open his ear, nor look
 On human face, he knew himself so vile.
 Yet it, with all its preciousness, was due
 To Virtue, and around her should have shed,
 Unasked, its savoury smell; but Vice, deformed
 Itself, and ugly, and of flavour rank,
 To rob fair Virtue of so sweet an incense,
 And with it to anoint and salve its own 690
 Rotten ulcers, and perfume the path that led
 To death,—strove daily by a thousand means :
 And oft succeeded to make Virtue sour
 In the world's nostrils, and its loathly self
 Smell sweetly. Rumour was the messenger
 Of defamation, and so swift that none
 Could be the first to tell an evil tale ;
 And was, withal, so infamous for lies,
 That he who of her sayings, on his creed,
 The fewest entered, was deemed wisest man. 700
 The fool, and many who had credit, too,
 For wisdom, grossly swallowed all she said,
 Unsifted ; and although, at every word,
 They heard her contradict herself, and saw
 Hourly they were imposed upon and mocked,
 Yet still they ran to hear her speak, and stared,
 And wondered much, and stood aghast, and said
 It could not be ; and, while they blushed for shame
 At their own faith, and seemed to doubt, believed,
 And whom they met, with many sanctions, told. 710
 So did experience fail to teach ;—so hard
 It was to learn this simple truth,—confirmed
 At every corner by a thousand proofs,—
 That common Fame most impudently lied.

'Twas Slander filled her mouth with lying words
 Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin. The man
 In whom this spirit entered was undone.
 His tongue was set on fire of hell, his heart

Was black as death, his legs were faint with haste
 To propagate the lie his soul had framed, 720
 His pillow was the peace of families
 Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached,
 Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods ;
 Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock
 Number the midnight watches, on his bed,
 Devising mischief more ; and early rose,
 And made most hellish meals of good men's names.

From door to door you might have seen him speed,
 Or placed amidst a group of gaping fools,
 And whispering in their ears, with his foul lips. 730
 Peace fled the neighbourhood in which he made
 His haunts ; and, like a moral pestilence,
 Before his breath, the healthy shoots and blooms
 Of social joy and happiness decayed.
 Fools only in his company were seen,
 And those forsaken of God, and to themselves
 Given up. The prudent shunned him and his house
 As one who had a deadly moral plague.
 And fain would all have shunned him at the day
 Of judgment ; but in vain. All who gave ear 740
 With greediness, or wittingly their tongues
 Made herald to his lies, around him wailed ;
 While on his face, thrown back by injured men,
 In characters of ever-blushing shame,
 Appeared ten thousand slanders, all his own.

Among the accursed, who sought a hiding place
 In vain, from fierceness of Jehovah's rage,
 And from the hot displeasure of the Lamb,
 Most wretched, most contemptible, most vile,--
 Stood the false priest, and in his conscience felt 750
 The fellest gnaw of the Undying Worm.
 And so he might, for he had on his hands
 The blood of souls, that would not wipe away.
 Hear what he was. He swore, in sight of God
 And man, to preach his master, Jesus Christ ;
 Yet preached himself : he swore that love of souls,

Alone, had drawn him to the church ; yet strewed
The path that led to hell with tempting flowers,
And in the ear of sinners, as they took
The way of death, he whispered peace : he swore 760
Away all love of lucre, all desire
Of earthly pomp ; and yet a princely seat
He liked, and to the clink of Mammon's box
Gave most rapacious ear. His prophecies,
He swore, were from the Lord ; and yet, taught lies
For gain : with quackish ointment, healed the wounds
And bruises of the soul outside, but left,
Within, the pestilent matter unobserved,
To sap the moral constitution quite,
And soon to burst again, incurable. 770
He with untempered mortar daubed the walls
Of Zion, saying, Peace, when there was none.
The man who came with thirsty soul to hear
Of Jesus, went away unsatisfied ;
For he another gospel preached than Paul,
And one that had no Saviour in't ; and yet,
His life was worse. Faith, charity, and love,
Humility, forgiveness, holiness,
Were words well lettered in his sabbath creed ;
But with his life he wrote as plain, Revenge, 780
Pride, tyranny, and lust of wealth and power
Inordinate, and lewdness unashamed.
He was a wolf in clothing of the lamb,
That stole into the fold of God, and on
The blood of souls, which he did sell to death,
Grew fat ; and yet, when any would have turned
Him out, he cried, " Touch not the priest of God."
And that he was anointed, fools believed ;
But knew, that day, he was the devil's priest,
Anointed by the hands of Sin and Death, 790
And set peculiarly apart to ill,—
While on him smoked the vials of perdition,
Poured measureless. Ah me ! what cursing then
Was heaped upon his head by ruined souls,
That charged him with their murder, as he stood,
With eye of all the unredeemed most sad,

Waiting the coming of the Son of Man !
 But let me pause, for thou hast seen his place
 And punishment, beyond the sphere of love.

Much was removed that tempted once to sin. 800
 Avarice no gold, no wine the drunkard, saw.
 But Envy had enough, as heretofore,
 To fill his heart with gall and bitterness.
 What made the man of envy what he was,
 Was worth in others, vileness in himself,
 A lust of praise, with undeserving deeds,
 And conscious poverty of soul : and still
 It was his earnest work and daily toil,
 With lying tongue, to make the noble seem
 Mean as himself. On fame's high hill he saw 810
 The laurel spread its everlasting green,
 And wished to climb ; but felt his knees too weak,
 And stood, below, unhappy, laying hands
 Upon the strong, ascending gloriously
 The steps of honour, bent to draw them back,
 Involving oft the brightness of their path,
 In mists his breath had raised. Whene'er he heard,
 As oft he did, of joy and happiness,
 And great prosperity, and rising worth,
 'Twas like a wave of wormwood o'er his soul 820
 Rolling its bitterness. His joy was wo,
 The wo of others. When, from wealth to want,
 From praises to reproach, from peace to strife,
 From mirth to tears, he saw a brother fall,
 Or Virtue make a slip,—his dreams were sweet.
 But chief with Slander, daughter of his own,
 He took unhallowed pleasure. When she talked,
 And with her filthy lips defiled the best,
 His ear drew near ; with wide attention gaped
 His mouth ; his eye, well pleased, as eager gazed 830
 As glutton, when the dish he most desired
 Was placed before him ; and a horrid mirth.
 At intervals, with laughter shook his sides.
 The critic, too, who, for a bit of bread,
 In book that fell aside before the ink

Was dry, poured forth excessive nonsense, gave
 Him much delight. The critics,—some, but few,—
 Were worthy men, and earned renown which had
 Immortal roots ; but most were weak and vile.
 And, as a cloudy swarm of summer flies, 840
 With angry hum and slender lance, beset
 The sides of some huge animal ; so did
 They buzz about the illustrious man, and fain,
 With his immortal honour, down the stream
 Of fame would have descended ; but, alas !
 The hand of Time drove them away. They were,
 Indeed, a simple race of men, who had
 One only art, which taught them still to say,
 Whate'er was done might have been better done ;
 And with this art, not ill to learn, they made 850
 A shift to live. But, sometimes too, beneath
 The dust they raised, was worth a while obscured ,
 And then did Envy prophesy and laugh.
 O Envy ! hide thy bosom, hide it deep.
 A thousand snakes, with black, envenomed mouths,
 Nest there, and hiss, and feed through all thy heart.--

Such one I saw, here interposing, said
 'The new arrived, in that dark den of shame,
 Whom who hath seen shall never wish to see
 Again. Before him, in the infernal gloom, 360
 That omnipresent shape of Virtue stood
 On which he ever threw his eye ; and, like
 A cinder that had life and feeling, seemed
 His face, with inward pining, to be what
 He could not be. As being that had burned
 Continually, in slow-consuming fire,—
 Half an eternity, and was to burn
 For evermore, he looked. Oh ! sight to be
 Forgotten ! thought too horrible to think !

But say, believing in such wo to come, 870
 Such dreadful certainty of endless pain,
 Could beings of forecasting mould, as thou
 Entitlest men, deliberately walk on,

Unscared, and overleap their own belief
 Into the lake of ever-burning fire ?

Thy tone of asking seems to make reply,
 And rightly seems : They did not so believe.
 Not one of all thou sawst lament and wail
 In Tophet, perfectly believed the word
 Of God, else none had thither gone. Absurd, 880
 To think that beings, made with reason, formed
 To calculate, compare, choose, and reject,
 By nature taught, and self, and every sense,
 To choose the good, and pass the evil by,
 Could, with full credence of a time to come,
 When all the wicked should be really damned,
 And cast beyond the sphere of light and love,
 Have persevered in sin ! Too foolish this
 For folly in its prime. Can aught that thinks 890
 And wills choose certain evil, and reject
 Good, in his heart believing he does so ?
 Could man choose pain, instead of endless joy ?
 Mad supposition, though maintained by some
 Of honest mind. Behold a man condemned !
 Either he ne'er inquired, and therefore he
 Could not believe ; or, else, he carelessly
 Inquired, and something other than the word
 Of God received into his cheated faith ;
 And therefore he did not believe, but down
 To hell descended, leaning on a lie. 900

Faith was bewildered much by men who meant
 To make it clear, so simple in itself,
 A thought so rudimental and so plain,
 That none by comment could it plainer make.
 All faith was one. In object, not in kind,
 The difference lay. The faith that saved a soul,
 And that which in the common truth believed,
 In essence, were the same. Hear, then, what faith,
 True, Christian faith, which brought salvation, was.
 Belief in all that God revealed to men ; 910
 Observe, in all that God revealed to men,

In all he promised, threatened, commanded, said,
 Without exception, and without a doubt.
 Who thus believed, being by the Spirit touched,
 As naturally the fruits of faith produced,
 Truth, temperance, meekness, holiness, and love,
 As human eye from darkness sought the light.
 How could he else ? If he, who had firm faith
 The morrow's sun should rise, ordered affairs
 Accordingly ; if he, who had firm faith 920
 That spring, and summer, and autumnal days,
 Should pass away, and winter really come,
 Prepared accordingly ; if he, who saw
 A bolt of death approaching, turned aside
 And let it pass ;—as surely did the man,
 Who verily believed the word of God,
 Though erring whiles, its general laws obey,
 Turn back from hell, and take the way to heaven.

That faith was necessary, some alleged,
 Unreined and uncontrollable by will. 930
 Invention savouring much of hell ! Indeed,
 It was the master-stroke of wickedness,
 Last effort of Abaddon's council dark,
 To make man think himself a slave to fate,
 And, worst of all, a slave to fate in faith.
 For thus 'twas reasoned then . From faith alone,
 And from opinion, springs all action ; hence,
 If faith's compelled, so is all action too :
 But deeds compelled are not accountable ;
 So man is not amenable to God. 940

Arguing that brought such monstrous birth, though
 good
 It seemed, must have been false. Most false it was,
 And by the book of God condemned, throughout.
 We freely own, that truth, when set before
 The mind, with perfect evidence, compelled
 Belief ; but error lacked such witness, still :
 And none, who now lament in moral night,
 The word of God refused on evidence

That might not have been set aside as false.
To reason, try, choose, and reject, was free. 950
Hence God, by faith, acquitted, or condemned;
Hence righteous men, with liberty of will,
Believed; and hence thou sawst in Erebus
The wicked, who as freely disbelieved
What else had led them to the land of life.

COURSE OF TIME.

Book IX.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK IX.

The Book opens with an apostrophe to Religion. The Bard resumes his narrative, and, continuing the description of the Assembly collected for Judgment, particularizes several classes of the Redeemed. While he mentions the classes, he points them out as they appear on the heavenly summits rejoicing.

First among the holy shone the faithful minister of God. The religious philosopher appeared in uncommon glory. The righteous governor and uncorrupted statesman, the man of active benevolence, and the Christian poet, were each conspicuous. None of the Redeemed were obscure, and multitudes were illustrious that had no name on earth

The Bard mentions the effect produced on the minds of the assembled multitudes by the absolute certainties of their situation, by the correct judgments they now formed, the just impressions they had of themselves, and the predictions they saw fulfilled. Suddenly a host of Angels appear, and the vast multitude of good and bad are separated to right and left in the final parting; the righteous being gathered with joy beneath a canopy of golden beams; the wicked bound under a dark and thundering cloud of wrath, where stood also Satan and his host, waiting for Judgment and the vengeance due to his rebellion in heaven, and his stratagems on earth. Thus separated, the Redeemed and the Reprobate stand expecting the Judge, and reading, upon either side of a bright arch bending high between them, a thrilling inscription.

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book IX.

FAIREST of those that left the calm of heaven,
And ventured down to man, with words of peace,
Daughter of Grace ! known by whatever name,
Religion, Virtue, Piety, or Love
Of Holiness, the day of thy reward
Was come. Ah ! thou wast long despised, despised
By those thou wooedst from death to endless life.
Modest and meek, in garments white as those
That seraphs wear, and countenance as mild
As Mercy looking on Repentance' tear ; 10
With eye of purity, now darted up
To God's eternal throne, now humbly bent
Upon thyself, and, weeping down thy cheek,
That glowed with universal love immense,
A tear, pure as the dews that fall in heaven ;
In thy left hand, the olive branch, and in
Thy right, the crown of immortality ;—
With noiseless foot, thou walkedst the vales of earth.
Beseeching men, from age to age, to turn
From utter death, to turn from woe to bliss ; 20
Beseeching evermore, and evermore
Despised—not evermore despised, not now,
Not at the day of doom ; most lovely then,

Most honourable, thou appeared, and most
To be desired. The guilty heard the song
Of thy redeemed, how loud ! and saw thy face,
How fair ! Alas ! it was too late ! the hour
Of making friends was passed, thy favour then
Might not be sought ; but recollection, sad
And accurate, as miser counting o'er 30
And o'er again the sum he must lay out,
Distinctly in the wicked's ear rehearsed
Each opportunity despised and lost,
While on them gleamed thy holy look, that like
A fiery torrent went into their souls.
The day of thy reward was come, the day
Of great remuneration to thy friends,
To those, known by whatever name, who sought,
In every place, in every time, to do
Unfeignedly their Maker's will, revealed, 40
Or gathered else from nature's school ; well pleased
With God's applause alone, that, like a stream
Of sweetest melody, at still of night
By wanderer heard, in their most secret ear
For ever whispered, Peace ; and, as a string
Of kindred tone awoke, their inmost soul
Responsive answered, Peace ; inquiring still
And searching, night and day, to know their duty
When known, with undisputing trust, with love
Unquenchable, with zeal, by reason's lamp 50
Inflamed,—performing ; and to Him, by whose
Profound, all-calculating skill alone,
Results—results even of the slightest act,
Are fully grasped, with unsuspecting faith,
All consequences leaving ; to abound,
Or want, alike prepared ; who knew to be
Exalted how, and how to be abased ;
How best to live, and how to die when asked.
Their prayers sincere, their alms in secret done,
Their fightings with themselves, their abstinence 60
From pleasure, though by mortal eye unseen.
Their hearts of resignation to the will
Of Heaven, their patient bearing of reproach

And shame, their charity, and faith, and hope,—
 Thou didst remember, and in full repaid.
 No bankrupt thou, who at the bargained hour
 Of payment due, sent to his creditors
 A tale of losses and mischances, long.
 Ensured by God himself, and from the stores
 And treasures of his wealth, at will supplied,— 70
 Religion, thou alone, of all that men,
 On earth, gave credit, to be reimbursed
 On the other side the grave, didst keep thy word,
 Thy day, and all thy promises fulfilled.

As in the mind, rich with unborrowed wealth,
 Where multitudes of thoughts for utterance strive,
 And all so fair, that each seems worthy first
 To enter on the tongue, and from the lips
 Have passage forth,—selection hesitates
 Perplexed, and loses time, anxious, since all 80
 Cannot be taken, to take the best; and yet
 Afraid, lest what he left be worthier still;
 And grieving much, where all so goodly look,
 To leave rejected one, or in the rear
 Let any be obscured: so did the bard,
 Though not unskilled, as on that multitude
 Of men who once awoke to judgment, he
 Threw back reflection, hesitating pause.
 For as his harp, in tone severe, had sung
 What figure the most famous sinners made, 90
 When from the grave they rose unmasked; so did
 He wish to character the good; but yet,
 Among so many, glorious all, all worth
 Immortal fame, with whom begin, with whom
 To end, was difficult to choose; and long
 His auditors, upon the tiptoe raised
 Of expectation, might have kept, had not
 His eye—for so it is in heaven, that what
 Is needed always is at hand—beheld,
 That moment, on a mountain near the throne 100
 Of God, the most renowned of the redeemed,
 Rejoicing: nor who first, who most, to praise,

Debated more ; but thus, with sweeter note,
Well pleased to sing, with highest eulogy,
And first, whom God applauded most,—began.

With patient ear, thou now hast heard,—though
whiles,
Aside digressing, ancient feeling turned
My lyre,—what shame the wicked had, that day,
What wailing, what remorse ; so hear, in brief,
How bold the righteous stood, the men redeemed, 110
How fair in virtue, and in hope how glad !
And first among the holy shone, as best
Became, the faithful minister of God.

See where he walks on yonder mount that lifts
Its summit high, on the right hand of bliss,
Sublime in glory, talking with his peers
Of the incarnate Saviour's love, and passed
Affliction lost in present joy ! See how
His face with heavenly ardour glows, and how
His hand, enraptured, strikes the golden lyre ! 120
As now, conversing of the Lamb, once slain,
He speaks ; and now, from vines that never hear
Of winter, but in monthly harvest yield
Their fruit abundantly, he plucks the grapes
Of life ! But what he was on earth it most
Behoves to say. Elect by God himself,
Anointed by the Holy Ghost, and set
Apart to the great work of saving men
Instructed fully in the will divine,
Supplied with grace in store, as need might ask, 130
And with the stamp and signature of heaven,
Truth, mercy, patience, holiness, and love,
Accredited ;—he was a man, by God,
The Lord, commissioned to make known to men
The eternal counsels ; in his Master's name,
To treat with them of everlasting things,
Of life, death, bliss, and wo ; to offer terms
Of pardon, grace, and peace, to the rebelled ;
To teach the ignorant soul, to cheer the sad ;

To bind, to loose, with all authority, 140
 To give the feeble strength, the hopeless hope.
 To help the halting, and to lead the blind ;
 To warn the careless, heal the sick of heart,
 Arouse the indolent, and on the proud
 And obstinate offender to denounce
 The wrath of God. All other men, what name
 Soe'er they bore, whatever office held,
 If lawful held,—the magistrate supreme,
 Or else subordinate, were chosen by men,
 'Their fellows, and from men derived their power 150
 And were accountable, for all they did,
 To men ; but he, alone, his office held
 Immediately from God, from God received
 Authority, and was to none but God
 Amenable. The elders of the church,
 Indeed, upon him laid their hands, and set
 Him visibly apart to preach the word
 Of life ; but this was merely outward rite,
 And decent ceremonial, performed
 On all alike , and oft, as thou hast heard, 160
 Performed on those God never sent ; his call,
 His consecration, his anointing, all
 Were inward, in the conscience heard and felt.
 Thus, by Jehovah chosen, and ordained
 To take into his charge the souls of men,
 And for his trust to answer at the day
 Of judgment,—great plenipotent of heaven,
 And representative of God on earth,—
 Fearless of men and devils ; unabashed
 By sin enthroned, or mockery of a prince, 170
 Unawed by armed legions, unseduced
 By offered bribes, burning with love to souls,
 Unquenchable, and mindful still of his
 Great charge and vast responsibility ;—
 High in the temple of the living God,
 He stood, amidst the people, and declared
 Aloud the truth, the whole revealed truth,
 Ready to seal it with his blood. Divine
 Resemblance most complete ' with mercy now

And love, his face, illumed, shone gloriously; 180
And frowning now indignantly, it seemed
As if offended Justice, from his eye,
Streamed forth vindictive wrath ! Men heard, alarmed
The uncircumcised infidel believed ;
Light-thoughted Mirth grew serious, and wept ;
The laugh profane sunk in a sigh of deep
Repentance ; the blasphemer, kneeling, prayed,
And, prostrate in the dust, for mercy called ;
And cursed, old, forsaken sinners gnashed
Their teeth, as if their hour had been arrived. 190
Such was his calling, his commission such.
Yet he was humble, kind, forgiving, meek,
Easy to be entreated, gracious, mild ;
And, with all patience and affection, taught,
Rebuked, persuaded, solaced, counselled, warned.
In fervent style and manner. Needy, poor,
And dying men, like music, heard his feet
Approach their beds ; and guilty wretches took
New hope, and in his prayers wept and smiled.
And blessed him, as they died forgiven ; and all 200
Saw in his face contentment, in his life,
The path to glory and perpetual joy.
Deep-learned in the philosophy of heaven,
He searched the causes out of good and ill,
Profoundly calculating their effects
Far past the bounds of Time ; and balancing,
In the arithmetic of future things,
The loss and profit of the soul to all
Eternity. A skilful workman he
In God's great moral vineyard : what to prune 210
With cautious hand he knew, what to uproot ;
What were mere weeds, and what celestial plants,
Which had unfading vigour in them, knew ;
Nor knew alone, but watched them night and day,
And reared and nourished them, till fit to be
Transplanted to the Paradise above.

Oh ! who can speak his praise ! great, humble man
He in the current of destruction stood,

And warned the sinner of his wo; led on
 Immanuel's members in the evil day; 220
 And, with the everlasting arms embraced
 Himself around, stood in the dreadful front
 Of battle, high, and warred victoriously
 With death and hell. And now was come his rest.
 His triumph day. Illustrious like a sun,
 In that assembly, he, shining from far,
 Most excellent in glory, stood assured,
 Waiting the promised crown, the promised throne,
 The welcome and approval of his Lord.
 Nor one alone, but many—prophets, priests, 230
 Apostles, great reformers, all that served
 Messiah faithfully, like stars appeared
 Of fairest beam; and round them gathered, clad
 In white, the vouchers of their ministry—
 The flock their care had nourished, fed, and saved.

Nor yet in common glory blazing, stood
 The true philosopher, decided friend
 Of truth and man. Determined foe of all
 Deception, calm, collected, patient, wise,
 And humble, undeceived by outward shape 240
 Of things, by fashion's revelry uncharmed,
 By honour unbewitched,—he left the chase
 Of vanity, and all the quackeries
 Of life, to fools and heroes, or whoe'er
 Desired them; and with reason, much despised,
 Traduced, yet heavenly reason, to the shade
 Retired—retired, but not to dream, or build
 Of ghostly fancies, seen in the deep noon
 Of sleep, ill-balanced theories; retired,
 But did not leave mankind; in pity, not 250
 In wrath, retired; and still, though distant, kept
 His eye on men; at proper angle took
 His stand to see them better, and, beyond
 The clamour which the bells of folly made,
 That most had hung about them, to consult
 With nature, how their madness might be cured,
 And how their true substantial comforts might.

Be multiplied. Religious man ! what God
By prophets, priests, evangelists, revealed
Of sacred truth, he thankfully received, 260
And, by its light directed, went in search
Of more. Before him, darkness fled ; and all
The goblin tribe, that hung upon the breasts
Of Night, and haunted still the moral gloom
With shapeless forms, and blue, infernal lights,
And indistinct, and devilish whisperings,
That the miseducated fancies vexed
Of superstitious men,—at his approach,
Dispersed, invisible. Where'er he went,
This lesson still he taught, To fear no ill 270
But sin, no being but Almighty God.
All-comprehending sage ! too hard alone
For him was man's salvation ; all besides,
Of use or comfort, that distinction made
Between the desperate savage, scarcely raised
Above the beast whose flesh he ate, undressed,
And the most polished of the human race,
Was product of his persevering search.
Religion owed him much, as from the false
She suffered much ; for still his main design. 280
In all his contemplations, was to trace
The wisdom, providence, and love of God,
And to his fellows, less observant, show
Them forth. From prejudice redeemed, with all
His passions still, above the common world,
Sublime in reason and in aim sublime,
He sat, and on the marvellous works of God
Sedately thought ; now glancing up his eye,
Intelligent, through all the starry dance,
And penetrating now the deep remote 290
Of central causes in the womb opaque
Of matter hid ; now with inspection nice,
Entering the mystic labyrinths of the mind,
Where thought, of notice ever shy, behind
Thought, disappearing, still retired ; and still,
Thought meeting thought, and thought awakening
thought,

And mingling still with thought in endless maze,—
 Bewildered observation ; now, with eye
 Yet more severely purged, looking far down
 Into the heart, where passion wove a web 300
 Of thousand thousand threads, in grain and hue
 All different ; then, upward venturing whiles,
 But reverently, and in his hand, the light
 Revealed, near the eternal Throne, he gazed,
 Philosophizing less than worshipping.
 Most truly great ! his intellectual strength
 And knowledge vast, to men of lesser mind,
 Seemed infinite ; yet, from his high pursuits,
 And reasonings most profound, he still returned
 Home, with an humbler and a warmer heart : 310
 And none so lowly bowed before his God,
 As none so well His awful majesty
 And goodness comprehended ; or so well
 His own dependency and weakness knew.

How glorious now, with vision purified
 At the Essential Truth, entirely free
 From error, he, investigating still,—
 For knowledge is not found, unsought, in heaven,—
 From world to world, at pleasure, roves, on wing 320
 Of golden ray upborne ; or, at the feet
 Of heaven's most ancient sages, sitting, hears
 New wonders of the wondrous works of God !

Illustrious too, that morning, stood the man
 Exalted by the people, to the throne
 Of government, established on the base
 Of justice, liberty, and equal right ;
 Who, in his countenance sublime, expressed
 A nation's majesty, and yet was meek
 And humble ; and in royal palace gave
 Example to the meanest, of the fear 330
 Of God, and all integrity of life
 And manners ; who, august, yet lowly ; who,
 Severe, yet gracious ; in his very heart,
 Detesting all oppression, all intent
 Of private aggrandizement ; and, the first,

In every public duty, held the scales
Of justice, and as the law, which reigned in him,
Commanded, gave rewards ; or, with the edge
Vindictive, smote, now light, now heavily,
According to the stature of the crime. 340
Conspicuous like an oak of healthiest bough,
Deep-rooted in his country's love, he stood,
And gave his hand to Virtue, helping up
The honest man to honour and renown ;
And, with the look which goodness wears in wrath,
Withering the very blood of Knavery,
And from his presence driving far, ashamed.

Nor less remarkable, among the blessed,
Appeared the man, who, in the senate-house,
Watchful, unhired, unbribed, and uncorrupt, 350
And party only to the common weal,
In virtue's awful rage, pleaded for right,
With truth so clear, with argument so strong,
With action so sincere, and tone so loud
And deep, as made the despot quake behind
His adamantine gates, and every joint,
In terror, smite his fellow-joint relaxed ;
Or, marching to the field, in burnished steel,
While, frowning on his brow, tremendous hung
The wrath of a whole people, long provoked,— 360
Mustered the stormy wings of war, in day
Of dreadful deeds ; and led the battle on,
When Liberty, swift as the fires of heaven,
In fury rode, with all her hosts, and threw
The tyrant down, or drove invasion back.
Illustrious he—illustrious all appeared,
Who ruled supreme in righteousness ; or held
Inferior place, in steadfast rectitude
Of soul. Peculiarly severe had been
The nurture of their youth, their knowledge great, 370
Great was their wisdom, great their cares, and great
Their self-denial, and their service done
To God and man ; and great was their reward,
At hand, proportioned to their worthy deeds.

Breathe all thy minstrelsy, immortal Harp !
 Breathe numbers warm with love, while I rehearse—
 Delighted theme, resembling most the songs
 Which, day and night, are sung before the Lamb !—
 Thy praise, O Charity ! thy labours most
 Divine ; thy sympathy with sighs, and tears, 380
 And groans ; thy great, thy god-like wish, to heal
 All misery, all fortune's wounds, and make
 The soul of every living thing rejoice.
 O thou wast needed much in days of Time !
 No virtue, half so much !—None half so fair !
 To all the rest, however fine, thou gavest
 A finishing and polish, without which
 No man e'er entered heaven. Let me record
 His praise, the man of great benevolence,
 Who pressed thee closely to his glowing heart, 390
 And to thy gentle bidding made his feet
 Swift minister. Of all mankind, his soul
 Was most in harmony with heaven : as one
 Sole family of brothers, sisters, friends,
 One in their origin, one in their rights
 To all the common gifts of providence,
 And in their hopes, their joys, and sorrows one,
 He viewed the universal human race.
 He needed not a law of state, to force
 Grudging submission to the law of God. 400
 The law of love was in his heart, alive ;
 What he possessed, he counted not his own ;
 But, like a faithful steward in a house
 Of public alms, what freely he received
 He freely gave, distributing to all
 The helpless the last mite beyond his own
 Temperate support, and reckoning still the gift
 But justice, due to want ; and so it was,
 Although the world, with compliment not ill
 Applied, adorned it with a fairer name. 410
 Nor did he wait till to his door the voice
 Of supplication came, but went abroad,
 With foot as silent as the starry dews,
 In search of misery that pined unseen,

And would not ask. And who can tell what sights
He saw ! what groans he heard, in that cold world
Below ! where Sin, in league with gloomy Death,
Marched daily through the length and breadth of all
The land, wasting at will, and making earth,
Fair earth ! a lazar-house, a dungeon dark, 420
Where Disappointment fed on ruined Hope,
Where Guilt, worn out, leaned on the triple edge
Of want, remorse, despair ; where Cruelty
Reached forth a cup of wormwood to the lips
Of Sorrow, that to deeper Sorrow wailed ;
Where Mockery, and Disease, and Poverty
Met miserable Age, erewhile sore bent
With his own burden ; where the arrowy winds
Of winter pierced the naked orphan babe,
And chilled the mother's heart, who had no home ; 430
And where, alas ! in mid-time of his day,
The honest man, robbed by some villain's hand,
Or with long sickness pale, and paler yet
With want and hunger, oft drank bitter draughts
Of his own tears, and had no bread to eat.
Oh ! who can tell what sights he saw, what shapes
Of wretchedness ! or who describe what smiles
Of gratitude illumined the face of wo,
While from his hand he gave the bounty forth !
As when the Sun, to Cancer wheeling back, 440
Returned from Capricorn, and showed the north,
That long had lain in cold and cheerless night,
His beamy countenance ; all nature then
Rejoiced together glad ; the flower looked up
And smiled ; the forest, from his locks, shook off
The hoary frosts, and clapped his hands ; the birds
Awoke, and, singing, rose to meet the day .
And from his hollow den, where many months
He slumbered sad in darkness, blithe and light
Of heart the savage sprung, and saw again 450
His mountains shine, and with new songs of love
Allured the virgin's ear : so did the house,
The prison-house of guilt, and all the abodes
Of unprovided helplessness, revive,

As on them looked the sunny messenger
 Of Charity. By angels tended still,
 That marked his deeds, and wrote them in the book
 Of God's remembrance; careless he to be
 Observed of men, or have each mite bestowed
 Recorded punctually, with name and place, 460
 In every bill of news. Pleased to do good,
 He gave, and sought no more, nor questioned much,
 Nor reasoned, who deserved; for well he knew
 The face of need. Ah me! who could mistake?
 The shame to ask, the want that urged within,
 Composed a look so perfectly distinct
 From all else human, and withal so full
 Of misery, that none could pass, untouched,
 And be a Christian, or thereafter claim,
 In any form, the name or rights of man, 470
 Or, at the day of judgment, lift his eye;
 While he, in name of Christ, who gave the poor
 A cup of water, or a bit of bread,
 Impatient for his advent, waiting stood,
 Glowing in robes of love and holiness,
 Heaven's fairest dress! and round him ranged, in white,
 A thousand witnesses appeared, prepared
 To tell his gracious deeds before the Throne.

Nor unrenowned among the most renowned,
 Nor 'mong the fairest unadmired, that morn, 480
 When highest fame was proof of highest worth,
 Distinguished stood the bard: not he, who sold
 The incommunicable, heavenly gift,
 To Folly, and with lyre of perfect tone,
 Prepared by God himself, for holiest praise,—
 Vilest of traitors! most dishonest man!—
 Sat by the door of Ruin, and made there
 A melody so sweet, and in the mouth
 Of drunkenness and debauch, that else had croaked
 In natural discordance jarring harsh, 490
 Put so divine a song, that many turned
 Aside, and entered in undone, and thought,
 Meanwhile, it was the gate of heaven, so like

An angel's voice the music seemed ; nor he,
 Who, whining grievously of damsel coy,
 Or blaming fortune, that would nothing give
 For doing naught, in indolent lament
 Unprofitable, passed his piteous days,
 Making himself the hero of his tale,
 Deserving ill the poet's name : but he, 500
 The bard, by God's own hand anointed, who,
 To Virtue's all-delighting harmony,
 His numbers tuned : who, from the fount of truth,
 Poured melody, and beauty poured, and love,
 In holy stream, into the human heart ;
 And, from the height of lofty argument,
 Who " justified the ways of God to man,"
 And sung what still he sings, approved, in heaven ;
 Though now with bolder note, above the damp
 Terrestrial, which the pure celestial fire 510
 Cooled, and restrained in part his flaming wing.

Philosophy was deemed of deeper thought,
 And judgment more severe, than Poetry ;
 To fable, she, and fancy, more inclined.
 And yet, if Fancy, as was understood,
 Was of creative nature, or of power,
 With self-wrought stuff, to build a fabric up,
 To mortal vision wonderful and strange,
 Philosophy, the theoretic, claimed,
 Undoubtedly, the first and highest place 520
 In Fancy's favour. Her material souls,
 Her chance, her atoms shaped alike, her white
 Proved black, her universal nothing, all ;
 And all her wondrous systems, how the mind
 With matter met ; how man was free, and yet
 All pre-ordained ; how evil first began ;
 And chief, her speculations, soaring high,
 Of the eternal, uncreated Mind,
 Which left all reason infinitely far
 Behind—surprising feat of theory !— 530
 Were pure creation of her own, webs wove
 Of gossamer in Fancy's lightest loom,

And no where, on the list of being made
 By God, recorded : but her look, meanwhile,
 Was grave and studious ; and many thought
 She reasoned deeply, when she wildly raved.

The true, legitimate, anointed bard,
 Whose song through ages poured its melody,
 Was most severely thoughtful, most minute
 And accurate of observation, most 540
 Familiarly acquainted with all modes
 And phases of existence. True, no doubt,
 He had originally drunk, from out
 The fount of life and love, a double draught,
 That gave whate'er he touched a double life :
 But this was mere desire at first, and power
 Devoid of means to work by ; need was still
 Of persevering, quick, inspective mood
 Of mind, of faithful memory, vastly stored,
 From universal being's ample field, 550
 With knowledge ; and a judgment, sound and clear,
 Well disciplined in nature's rules of taste ;
 Discerning to select, arrange, combine,
 From infinite variety, and still
 To nature true ; and guide withal, hard task,
 The sacred, living impetus divine,
 Discreetly through the harmony of song.
 Completed thus, the poet sung ; and age
 To age, enraptured, heard his measures flow ;
 Enraptured, for he poured the very fat 560
 And marrow of existence through his verse,
 And gave the soul, that else, in selfish cold,
 Unwarmed by kindred interest, had lain,
 A roomy life, a glowing relish high,
 A sweet, expansive brotherhood of being—
 Joy answering joy, and sigh responding sigh,
 Through all the fibres of the social heart.
 Observant, sympathetic, sound of head,
 Upon the ocean vast of human thought,
 With passion rough and stormy, venturing out, 570
 Even as the living billows rolled, he threw

His numbers over them, seized as they were,
 And to perpetual ages left them fixed,
 To each, a mirror of itself displayed;
 Despair for ever lowering dark on Sin,
 And Happiness on Virtue smiling fair.

He was the minister of fame, and gave
 To whom he would renown; nor missed himself—
 Although despising much the idiot roar
 Of popular applause, that sudden, oft, 580
 Unnaturally turning, whom it nursed
 Itself devoured—the lasting fame, the praise
 Of God and holy men, to excellence given.
 Yet less he sought his own renown, than wished
 To have the eternal images of truth
 And beauty, pictured in his verse, admired.
 'Twas these, taking immortal shape and form
 Beneath his eye, that charmed his midnight watch,
 And oft his soul with awful transports shook
 Of happiness, unfelt by other men. 590
 This was that spell, that sorcery, which bound
 The poet to the lyre, and would not let
 Him go; that hidden mystery of joy,
 Which made him sing in spite of fortune's worst,
 And was, at once, both motive and reward.

Nor now among the choral harps, in this
 The native clime of song, are those unknown,
 With higher note ascending, who, below,
 In holy ardour, aimed at lofty strains.
 True fame is never lost: many, whose names 600
 Were honoured much on earth, are famous here
 For poetry, and, with arch-angel harps,
 Hold no unequal rivalry in song;
 Leading the choirs of heaven, in numbers high,
 In numbers ever sweet and ever new.

Behold them yonder, where the river pure
 Flows warbling down before the throne of God;
 And, shading on each side, the tree of life

Spreads its unfading boughs !—See how they shine,
 In garments white, quaffing deep draughts of love, 610
 And harping on their harps, new harmonies
 Preparing for the ear of God, Most High !

But why should I, of individual worth,
 Of individual glory, longer sing ?
 No true believer was, that day, obscure ;
 No holy soul but had enough of joy ;
 No pious wish without its full reward.
 Who in the Father and the Son believed,
 With faith that wrought by love to holy deeds,
 And purified the heart, none trembled there, 620
 Nor had by earthly guise his rank concealed ;
 Whether, unknown, he tilled the ground remote,
 Observant of the seasons, and adored
 God in the promise, yearly verified,
 Of seed-time, harvest, summer, winter, day
 And night, returning duly at the time
 Appointed ; or, on the shadowy mountain side,
 Worshipped at dewy eve, watching his flocks ;
 Or, trading, saw the wonders of the deep,
 And as the needle to the starry Pole 630
 Turned constantly, so he his heart to God ;
 Or else, in servitude severe, was taught
 To break the bonds of sin ; or, begging, learned
 To trust the Providence that fed the raven,
 And clothed the lily with her annual gown.

Most numerous, indeed, among the saved,
 And many, too, not least illustrious, shone
 The men who had no name on earth. Eclipsed
 By lowly circumstance, they lived unknown,
 Like stream that in the desert warbles clear, 640
 Still nursing, as it goes, the herb and flower,
 Though never seen ; or like the star, retired
 In solitudes of ether, far beyond
 All sight, not of essential splendour less,
 Though shining unobserved. None saw their pure
 Devotion, none their tears, their faith, and love,

Which burned within them, both to God and man,—
 None saw but God. He, in his bottle, all
 Their tears preserved, and every holy wish
 Wrote in his book; and, not as they had done, 650
 But as they wished with all their heart to do,
 Arrayed them now in glory, and displayed,—
 No longer hid by coarse, uncourtly garb,—
 In lustre equal to their inward worth.

Man's time was passed, and his eternity
 Begun. No fear remained of change. The youth,
 Who, in the glowing morn of vigorous life,
 High-reaching after great religious deeds,
 Was suddenly cut off, with all his hopes
 In sunny bloom, and unaccomplished left 660
 His withered aims,—saw everlasting days,
 Before him, dawning rise, in which to achieve
 All glorious things, and get himself the name
 That jealous Death too soon forbade on earth.

Old things had passed away, and all was new;
 And yet, of all the new-begun, naught so
 Prodigious difference made, in the affairs
 And thoughts of every man, as certainty.
 For doubt, all doubt, was gone, of every kind;
 Doubt that erewhile, beneath the lowest base 670
 Of mortal reasonings, deepest laid, crept in,
 And made the strongest, best cemented towers
 Of human workmanship, so weakly shake,
 And to their lofty tops so waver still,
 That those who built them, feared their sudden fall.
 But doubt, all doubt, was passed; and, in its place,
 To every thought that in the heart of man
 Was present, now had come an absolute,
 Unquestionable certainty, which gave
 To each decision of the mind immense 680
 Importance, raising to its proper height
 The sequent tide of passion, whether joy
 Or grief. The good man knew, in very truth,
 That he was saved to all eternity,

And feared no more ; the bad had proof complete,
 That he was damned for ever ; and believed
 Entirely, that on every wicked soul
 Anguish should come, and wrath, and utter wo.

Knowledge was much increased, but wisdom more.
 The film of Time, that still before the sight 690
 Of mortal vision danced, and led the best
 Astray, pursuing unsubstantial dreams,
 Had dropped from every eye. Men saw that they
 Had vexed themselves in vain, to understand
 What now no hope to understand remained ;
 That they had often counted evil good,
 And good for ill ; laughed when they should have wept,
 And wept, forlorn, when God intended mirth.
 But what, of all their follies passed, surprised
 Them most, and seemed most totally insane 700
 And unaccountable, was value set
 On objects of a day, was serious grief
 Or joy for loss or gain of mortal things.
 So utterly impossible it seemed,
 When men their proper interests saw, that aught
 Of terminable kind, that aught, which e'er
 Could die, or cease to be, however named,
 Should make a human soul—a legal heir
 Of everlasting years—rejoice or weep,
 In earnest mood ; for nothing now seemed worth 710
 A thought, but had eternal bearing in't.

Much truth had been assented to in Time,
 Which never, till this day, had made a due
 Impression on the heart. Take one example.
 Early from heaven it was revealed, and oft
 Repeated in the world, from pulpits preached,
 And penned and read in holy books, that God
 Respected not the persons of mankind
 Had this been truly credited and felt,
 The king, in purple robe, had owned, indeed, 720
 The beggar for his brother ; pride of rank
 And office thawed into paternal love ;

Oppression feared the day of equal rights,
 Predicted ; covetous extortion kept
 In mind the hour of reckoning, soon to come ;
 And bribed injustice thought of being judged,
 When he should stand, on equal foot, beside
 The man he wronged, and surely—nay, 'tis true,
 Most true, beyond all whispering of doubt,
 That he, who lifted up the reeking scourge, 730
 Dripping with gore from the slave's back, before
 He struck again, had paused, and seriously
 Of that tribunal thought, where God himself
 Should look him in the face, and ask in wrath,
 " Why didst thou this? Man! was he not thy brother,
 Bone of thy bone, and flesh and blood of thine?"
 But, ah! this truth, by heaven and reason taught,
 Was never fully credited on earth.
 The titled, flattered, lofty men of power,
 Whose wealth bought verdicts of applause for deeds 740
 Of wickedness, could ne'er believe the time
 Should truly come when judgment should proceed
 Impartially against them, and they, too,
 Have no good speaker at the Judge's ear,
 No witnesses to bring them off for gold,
 No power to turn the sentence from its course ;
 And they of low estate, who saw themselves,
 Day after day, despised, and wronged, and mocked
 Without redress, could scarcely think the day 750
 Should e'er arrive, when they, in truth, should stand
 On perfect level with the potentates
 And princes of the earth, and have their cause
 Examined fairly, and their rights allowed.
 But now this truth was felt, believed and felt,
 That men were really of a common stock,
 That no man ever had been more than man.

Much prophecy—revealed by holy bards,
 Who sung the will of heaven by Judah's streams—
 Much prophecy, that waited long, the scoff
 Of lips uncircumcised, was then fulfilled ; 760
 To the last tittle scrupulously fulfilled.

It was foretold by those of ancient days,
A time should come, when wickedness should weep
Abased ; when every lofty look of man
Should be bowed down, and all his haughtiness
Made low ; when righteousness alone should lift
The head in glory, and rejoice at heart ;
When many, first in splendour and renown,
Should be most vile ; and many, lowest once,
And last in Poverty's obscurest nook, 770
Highest and first in honour, should be seen,
Exalted ; and when some, when all the good,
Should rise to glory and eternal life ;
And all the bad, lamenting, wake, condemned
To shame, contempt, and everlasting grief.

These prophecies had tarried long, so long
That many wagged the head, and, taunting, asked,
"When shall they come?" but asked no more, nor
mocked :
For the reproach of prophecy was wiped
Away, and every word of God found true. 780

And, oh ! what change of state, what change of rank,
In that assembly every where was seen !
The humble-hearted laughed, the lofty mourned,
And every man, according to his works
Wrought in the body, there took character.

Thus stood they mixed, all generations stood !
Of all mankind, innumerable throng !
Great harvest of the grave !—waiting the will
Of heaven, attentively, and silent all,
As forest spreading out beneath the calm 790
Of evening skies, when even the single leaf
Is heard distinctly rustle down and fall ;
So silent they, when from above, the sound
Of rapid wheels approached, and suddenly
In heaven appeared a host of angels strong,
With chariots and with steeds of burning fire ;
Cherub, and Seraph, Thrones, Dominions, Powers,

Bright in celestial armour, dazzling, rode.
And, leading in the front, illustrious shone
Michael and Gabriel, servants long approved 800
In high commission,—girt that day with power,
Which naught created, man or devil, might
Resist. Nor waited, gazing, long; but, quick
Descending, silently and without song,
As servants bent to do their master's work,
To middle air they raised the human race,
Above the path long travelled by the sun;
And as a shepherd from the sheep divides
The goats; or husbandman, with reaping bands,
In harvest, separates the precious wheat, 810
Selected from the tares; so did they part
Mankind, the good and bad, to right and left,
To meet no more; these ne'er again to smile,
Nor those to weep; these never more to share
Society of mercy with the saints,
Nor, henceforth, those to suffer with the vile.
Strange parting! not for hours, nor days, nor months,
Nor for ten thousand times ten thousand years;
But for a whole eternity!—though fit,
And pleasant to the righteous, yet to all 820
Strange, and most strangely felt! The sire, to right
Retiring, saw the son—sprung from his loins,
Beloved how dearly once; but who forgot,
Too soon, in sin's intoxicating cup,
The father's warnings and the mother's tears—
Fall to the left among the reprobate;
And sons, redeemed, beheld the fathers, whom
They loved and honoured once, gathered among
The wicked. Brothers, sisters, kinsmen, friends;
Husband and wife, who ate at the same board, 830
And under the same roof, united, dwelt,
From youth to hoary age, bearing the chance
And change of Time together, parted then
For evermore. But none, whose friendship grew
From virtue's pure and everlasting root,
Took different roads; these, knit in stricter bonds
Of amity, embracing, saw no more

Death, with his sithe, stand by ; nor heard the word,
 The bitter word, which closed all earthly friendships,
 And finished every feast of love—Farewell. 840
 To all, strange parting ! to the wicked, sad
 And terrible ! New horror seized them, while
 They saw the saints withdrawing, and with them
 All hope of safety, all delay of wrath.

Beneath a crown of rosy light,—like that
 Which once, in Goshen, on the flocks, and herds
 And dwellings, smiled, of Jacob, while the land
 Of Nile was dark ; or like the pillar bright
 Of sacred fire, that stood above the sons
 Of Israel, when they camped at midnight by 850
 The foot of Horeb, or the desert side
 Of Sinai ;—now, the righteous took their place,
 All took their place, who ever wished to go
 To heaven, for heaven's own sake. Not one remained
 Among the accursed, that e'er desired with all
 The heart to be redeemed, that ever sought
 Submissively to do the will of God,
 Howe'er it crossed his own ; or to escape
 Hell, for aught other than its penal fires.
 All took their place, rejoicing, and beheld, 860
 In centre of the crown of golden beams
 That canopied them o'er, these gracious words,
 Blushing with tints of love : " Fear not, my saints."

To other sight of horrible dismay,
 Jehovah's ministers the wicked drove,
 And left them bound immovable in chains
 Of Justice. O'er their heads a bowless cloud
 Of indignation hung ; a cloud it was
 Of thick and utter darkness, rolling, like
 An ocean, tides of livid, pitchy flame ; 870
 With thunders charged, and lightnings ruinous,
 And red with forked vengeance, such as wounds
 The soul ; and full of angry shapes of wrath,
 And eddies whirling with tumultuous fire,
 And forms of terror raving to and fro,

And monsters, unimagined heretofore
 By guilty men in dreams before their death,
 From horrid to more horrid changing still,
 In hideous movement through that stormy gulf:
 And evermore the Thunders, murmuring, spoke 880
 From out the darkness, uttering loud these words,
 Which every guilty conscience echoed back :
 " Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."
 Dread words ! that barred excuse, and threw the weight
 Of every man's perdition on himself,
 Directly home. Dread words ! heard then, and heard
 For ever through the wastes of Erebus.
 " Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not !"
 These were the words which glowed upon the sword,
 Whose wrath burned fearfully behind the cursed, 890
 As they were driven away from God to Tophet.
 " Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not !"
 These are the words to which the harps of grief
 Are strung ; and, to the chorus of the damned,
 The rocks of hell repeat them, evermore ;
 Loud echoed through the caverns of despair,
 And poured in thunder on the ear of Wo.

Nor ruined men alone, beneath that cloud,
 Trembled. There, Satan and his legions stood,
 Satan, the first and eldest sinner,—bound 900
 For judgment. He, by other name, held once
 Conspicuous rank in heaven among the sons
 Of happiness, rejoicing, day and night.
 But pride, that was ashamed to bow to God,
 Most High, his bosom filled with hate, his face
 Made black with envy, and in his soul begot
 Thoughts guilty of rebellion 'gainst the throne
 Of the Eternal Father and the Son,—
 From everlasting built on righteousness.

Ask not how pride, in one created pure, 910
 Could grow ; or sin without example spring,
 Where holiness alone was sown : esteem't
 Enough, that he, as every being made

By God, was made entirely holy, had
 The will of God before him set for law
 And regulation of his life, and power
 To do as bid ; but was, meantime, left free,
 To prove his worth, his gratitude, his love ;
 How proved besides ? for how could service done,
 That might not else have been withheld, evince 920
 The will to serve, which, rather than the deed,
 God doth require, and virtue counts alone ?
 To stand or fall, to do or leave undone,
 Is reason's lofty privilege, denied
 To all below, by instinct bound to fate,
 Unmeriting, alike, reward or blame.

Thus free, the Devil chose to disobey
 The will of God, and was thrown out from heaven,
 And with him all his bad example stained :
 Yet not to utter punishment decreed, 930
 But left to fill the measure of his sin,
 In tempting and seducing man—too soon,
 Too easily seduced ! And, from the day
 He first set foot on earth,—of rancour full,
 And pride, and hate, and malice, and revenge,—
 He set himself, with most felonious aim
 And hellish perseverance, to root out
 All good, and in its place to plant all ill ;
 To rub and raze, from all created things,
 The fair and holy portraiture divine, 940
 And on them to enstamp his features grim,
 To draw all creatures off from loyalty
 To their Creator, and to make them bow
 The knee to him. Nor failed of great success
 As populous hell, this day, can testify.
 He held, indeed, large empire in the world,
 Contending proudly with the King of heaven.
 To him temples were built, and sacrifice
 Of costly blood upon his altars flowed ; [950
 And—what best pleased him, for in show he seemed
 Then likest God—whole nations, bowing, fell
 Before him, worshipping, and from his lips

Entreated oracles, which he, by priests,—
For many were his priests in every age,—
Answered, though guessing but at future things,
And erring oft, yet still believed ; so well
His ignorance, in ambiguous phrase, he veiled.

Nor needs it wonder, that with man once fallen,
His tempting should succeed. Large was his mind
And understanding ; though impaired by sin, 960
Still large ; and constant practice, day and night,
In cunning, guile, and all hypocrisy,
From age to age, gave him experience vast
In sin's dark tactics, such as boyish man,
Unarmed by strength divine, could ill withstand.
And well he knew his weaker side ; and still,
His lures, with baits that pleased the senses, busked,
To his impatient passions offering terms
Of present joy, and bribing reason's eye
With earthly wealth, and honours near at hand. 970
Nor failed to misadvise his future hope
And faith, by false, unkerneled promises
Of heavens of sensual gluttony and love,
That suited best their grosser appetites.
Into the sinner's heart, who lived secure,
And feared him least, he entered at his will.
But chief, he chose his residence in courts
And conclaves, stirring princes up to acts
Of blood and tyranny ; and moving priests
To barter truth, and swap the souls of men 980
For lusty benefices and address
Of lofty sounding. Nor the saints elect,
Who walked with God, in virtue's path sublime,
Did he not sometimes venture to molest ;
In dreams and moments of unguarded thought,
Suggesting guilty doubts and fears, that God
Would disappoint their hope ; and in their way
Bestrewing pleasures, tongued so sweet, and so
In holy garb arrayed, that many stooped,
Believing them of heavenly sort, and fell ; 990
And to their high professions, brought disgrace

And scandal ; to themselves, thereafter, long
 And bitter nights of sore repentance, vexed
 With shame, unwonted sorrow, and remorse.
 And more they should have fallen, and more have wept,
 Had not their guardian angels, who, by God
 Commissioned, stood beside them in the hour
 Of danger, whether craft, or fierce attack,
 To Satan's deepest skill opposing skill
 More deep, and to his strongest arm, an arm 1000
 More strong,—upborne them in their hands, and filled
 Their souls with all discernment, quick, to pierce
 His stratagems and fairest shows of sin.

Now, like a roaring lion, up and down
 The world, destroying, though unseen, he raged ;
 And now, retiring back to Tartarus,
 Far back, beneath the thick of guiltiest dark,
 Where night ne'er heard of day, in council grim,
 He sat with ministers whose thoughts were damned
 And there such plans devised, as, had not God 1010
 Checked and restrained, had added earth entire
 To hell, and uninhabited left heaven,
 Jehovah unadored. Nor unsevere,
 Even then, his punishment deserved. The Worm
 That never dies, coiled in his bosom, gnawed
 Perpetually ; sin after sin brought pang
 Succeeding pang ; and, now and then, the bolts
 Of Zion's King, vindictive, smote his soul
 With fiery wo to blast his proud designs ;
 And gave him earnest of the wrath to come. 1020
 And chief, when, on the cross, Messiah said,
 " 'Tis finished," did the edge of vengeance smite
 Him through, and all his gloomy legions touch
 With new despair. But yet, to be the first
 In mischief, to have armies at his call,
 To hold dispute with God, in days of Time,
 His pride and malice fed, and bore him up
 Above the worst of ruin. Still, to plan
 And act great deeds, though wicked, brought at least
 The recompense which nature hath attached 1030

To all activity, and aim pursued
 With perseverance, good, or bad ; for as,
 By nature's laws, immutable and just,
 Enjoyment stops where indolence begins ;
 And purposeless, to-morrow borrowing sloth,
 Itself, heaps on its shoulders loads of wo,
 Too heavy to be borne ; so industry—
 To meditate, to plan, resolve, perform,
 Which in itself is good—as surely brings
 Reward of good, no matter what be done : 1010
 And such reward the Devil had, as long
 As the decrees eternal gave him space
 To work. But now, all action ceased ; his hope
 Of doing evil perished quite ; his pride,
 His courage, failed him ; and beneath that cloud
 Which hung its central terrors o'er his head,
 With all his angels, he, for sentence, stood,
 And rolled his eyes around, that uttered guilt
 And wo, in horrible perfection joined.
 As he had been the chief and leader, long, 1050
 Of the apostate crew that warred with God
 And holiness ; so now, among the bad,
 Lowest, and most forlorn, and trembling most,
 With all iniquity deformed and foul,
 With all perdition ruinous and dark,
 He stood,—example awful of the wrath
 Of God ! sad mark, to which ail sin must fall !—
 And made, on every side, so black a hell,
 That spirits, used to night and misery,
 To distance drew, and looked another way ; 1060
 And from their golden cloud, far off, the saints
 Saw round him darkness grow more dark, and heard
 The impatient thunderbolts, with deadliest crash
 And frequentest, break o'er his head,—the sign
 That Satan, there, the vilest sinner, stood.

Ah me ! what eyes were there beneath that cloud !
 Eyes of despair, final and certain ! eyes
 That looked, and looked, and saw, where'er they looked,
 Interminable darkness ! utter wo !

'Twas pitiful to see the early flower 1070
Nipped by the unfeeling frost, just when it rose,
Lovely in youth, and put its beauties on.

'Twas pitiful to see the hopes of all
The year, the yellow harvest, made a heap
By rains of judgment; or by torrents swept,
With flocks and cattle, down the raging flood;
Or scattered by the winnowing winds, that bore
Upon their angry wings, the wrath of heaven.
Sad was the field, where, yesterday, was heard
The roar of war; and sad the sight of maid, 1080
Of mother, widow, sister, daughter, wife,
Stooping and weeping over senseless, cold,
Defaced, and mangled lumps of breathless earth,
Which had been husbands, fathers, brothers, sons,
And lovers, when that morning's sun arose.

'Twas sad to see the wonted seat of friend
Removed by death; and sad to visit scenes,
When old, where, in the smiling morn of life,
Lived many, who both knew and loved us much,
And they all gone, dead, or dispersed abroad; 1090
And stranger faces seen among their hills.

'Twas sad to see the little orphan babe
Weeping and sobbing on its mother's grave.

'Twas pitiful to see an old, forlorn,
Decrepit, withered wretch, unhoused, unclad,
Starving to death with poverty and cold.

'Twas pitiful to see a blooming bride,
That promise gave of many a happy year,
Touched by decay, turn pale, and waste, and die.

'Twas pitiful to hear the murderous thrust 1100
Of ruffian's blade that sought the life entire.

'Twas sad to hear the blood come gurgling forth
From out the throat of the wild suicide.

Sad was the sight of widowed, childless age
Weeping.—I saw it once. Wrinkled with time,
And hoary with the dust of years, an old
And worthy man came to his humble roof,
Tottering and slow, and on the threshold stood.
No foot no voice, was heard within. None came

To meet him, where he oft had met a wife, 1116
And sons, and daughters, glad at his return ;
None came to meet him ; for that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family ; and now
He stood in solitude, in solitude
Wide as the world ; for all, that made to him
Society, had fled beyond its bounds.
Wherever strayed his aimless eye, there lay
The wreck of some fond hope, that touched his soul
With bitter thoughts, and told him all was passed. 1120
His lonely cot was silent, and he looked
As if he could not enter. On his staff,
Bending, he leaned ; and from his weary eye,
Distressing sight ! a single tear-drop wept.
None followed, for the fount of tears was dry.
Alone and last, it fell from wrinkle down
To wrinkle, till it lost itself, drunk by
The withered cheek, on which again no smile
Should come, or drop of tenderness be seen.
This sight was very pitiful ; but one 1130
Was sadder still, the saddest seen in Time.
A man, to-day, the glory of his kind,
In reason clear, in understanding large,
In judgment sound, in fancy quick, in hope
Abundant, and in promise, like a field
Well cultured, and refreshed with dews from God ;
To-morrow, chained, and raving mad, and whipped
By servile hands ; sitting on dismal straw,
And gnashing with his teeth against the chain,
The iron chain, that bound him hand and foot ; 1140
And trying whiles to send his glaring eye
Beyond the wide circumference of his wo ;
Or, humbling more, more miserable still,
Giving an idiot laugh that served to show
The blasted scenery of his horrid face ;
Calling the straw his sceptre, and the stone,
On which he, pinioned, sat, his royal throne.
Poor, poor, poor man ! fallen far below the brute ;
His reason strove in vain to find her way,

Lost in the stormy desert of his brain , 1150
 And, being active still, she wrought all strange,
 Fantastic, execrable, monstrous things.

All these were sad, and thousands more, that sleep
 Forgotten beneath the funeral pall of Time ;
 And bards, as well became, bewailed them much,
 With doleful instruments of weeping song.
 But what were these ? What might be worse had in't,
 However small, some grains of happiness ;
 And man ne'er drank a cup of earthly sort,
 That might not held another drop of gall ; 1160
 Or, in his deepest sorrow, laid his head
 Upon a pillow, set so close with thorns,
 That might not held another prickle still.
 Accordingly, the saddest human look
 Had hope in't ; faint, indeed, but still 'twas hope.
 But why excuse the misery of earth ?
 Say it was dismal, cold, and dark, and deep,
 Beyond the utterance of strongest words ;
 But say that none remembered it, who saw
 The eye of beings damned for evermore, 1170
 Rolling, and rolling, rolling still in vain,
 To find some ray, to see beyond the gulf
 Of an unavenued, fierce, fiery, hot,
 Interminable, dark Futurity !
 And rolling still, and rolling still in vain !

Thus stood the reprobate beneath the shade
 Of terror, and beneath the crown of love,
 The good ; and there was silence in the vault
 Of heaven ; and as they stood and listened, they heard
 Afar to left, among the utter dark, 1180
 Hell rolling o'er his waves of burning fire,
 And thundering through his caverns, empty then
 As if he preparation made, to act
 The final vengeance of the fiery Lamb.
 And there was heard, coming from out the Pit,
 The hollow wailing of Eternal Death,
 And horrid cry of the Undying Worm.

The wicked paler turned, and scarce the good
Their colour kept; but were not long dismayed.
That moment, in the heavens, how wondrous fair! 1190
The angel of Mercy stood, and, on the bad
Turning his back, over the ransomed threw
His bow, bedropped with imagery of love,
And promises on which their faith reclined.
Throughout, deep, breathless silence reigned again,
And on the circuit of the upper spheres,
A glorious seraph stood, and cried aloud,
That every ear of man and devil heard,
“Him that is filthy, let be filthy still;
Him that is holy, let be holy still.” 1200
And, suddenly, another squadron bright,
Of high arch-angel glory, stooping, brought
A marvellous bow,—one base upon the Cross,
The other on the shoulder of the Bear,
They placed,—from south to north, spanning the
 heavens,
And on each hand dividing good and bad,—
Who read, on either side, these burning words,
Which ran along the arch in living fire,
And wanted not to be believed in full:
“As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day.” 1210

COURSE OF TIME.

Book X.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK X.

In the beginning the author invokes the presence and aid of the Holy Spirit, while he interprets the notes of the Ancient Bard describing the Day of Judgment.

The Bard proceeds. Soon millions infinite of holy spirits are heard and seen gathering before the Eternal Throne, from heaven and from countless worlds around. Silence ensues, and from a radiant cloud the voice of God comes forth, announces to the assembled millions the object of calling them to his presence, and states that the destiny of Man is concluded, the Day of Retribution come, and the generations of Earth collected at the place of Judgment. The voice then addresses the Son Messiah, assigning to him the covenanted office of Judge. The Son, taking the Book of God's Remembrance, the Crowns of life, and the Sword of justice, and attended by the summoned millions, moves forth in glory, becomes visible to the assembled sons of men, and ascends the Throne between the good and bad.—An angel unfolds the book. In awful silence, the Judge waits, while every conscience attests the record. He rises to pronounce the sentence. No creature breathes ; the spheres and stars, with every particle of matter, stand still.—Those trembling on the left hear a dread decree of warning words ; the Sword of justice gleams and plunges in their midst ; they sink in utter darkness, returning one groan of boundless woe, as Hell closes round, and the Undying Worm and Second Death begin their endless repast.—The last Fire then consumes the Earth.—Finally, the righteous hear a joyous welcome, receive their crowns, and ascend with the Judge, singing with the angels, ' Glory to God and to the Lamb.'

THE
COURSE OF TIME.

Book X

God of my fathers ! holy, just, and good !
My God ! my Father ! my unfailing Hope !
Jehovah ! let the incense of my praise,
Accepted, burn before thy mercy seat,
And in thy presence burn, both day and night.
Maker ! Preserver ! my Redeemer ! God !
Whom have I in the heavens but Thee alone ?
On earth, but Thee, whom should I praise, whom love ?
For Thou hast brought me hitherto, upheld
By thy omnipotence ; and from thy grace, 10
Unbought, unmerited, though not unsought—
The wells of thy salvation, hast refreshed
My spirit, watering it, at morn and even ;
And, by thy Spirit, which thou freely givest
To whom thou wilt, hast led my venturous song,
Over the vale and mountain tract, the light
And shade of man ; into the burning deep
Descending now, and now circling the mount,
Where highest sits Divinity enthroned ;
Rolling along the tide of fluent thought, 20
The tide of moral, natural, divine ;
Gazing on past and present, and again,
On rapid pinion borne, outstripping Time,

In long excursion, wandering through the groves
 Unfading, and the endless avenues,
 That shade the landscape of eternity;
 And talking there with holy angels met,
 And future men, in glorious vision seen!
 Nor unrewarded have I watched at night,
 And heard the drowsy sound of neighboring sleep. 30
 New thought, new imagery, new scenes of bliss
 And glory, unrehearsed by mortal tongue,
 Which, unrevealed, I, trembling, turned and left.
 Bursting at once upon my ravished eye,—
 With joy unspeakable have filled my soul,
 And made my cup run over with delight:
 Though in my face the blasts of adverse winds,
 While boldly circumnavigating man,
 Winds seeming adverse, though perhaps not so,
 Have beat severely; disregarded beat, 40
 When I, behind me, heard the voice of God,
 And his propitious Spirit say, Fear not!

God of my fathers! ever present God!
 This offering, more, inspire, sustain, accept;
 Highest, if numbers answer to the theme;
 Best answering, if thy Spirit dictate most.
 Jehovah! breathe upon my soul; my heart
 Enlarge; my faith increase; increase my hope;
 My thoughts exalt; my fancy sanctify,
 And all my passions, that I near thy throne 50
 May venture, unproved; and sing the day,
 Which none unholy ought to name, the Day
 Of Judgment! greatest day, passed or to come!
 Day! which,—deny me what thou wilt, deny
 Me home, or friend, or honourable name,—
 Thy mercy grant, I, thoroughly prepared,
 With comely garment of redeeming love,
 May meet, and have my Judge for Advocate.

Come, Gracious Influence, Breath of the Lord,
 And touch me trembling, as thou touched the man, 60
 Greatly beloved, when he in vision saw,

By Ulai's stream, the Ancient sit ; and talked
 With Gabriel, to his prayer swiftly sent,
 At evening sacrifice. Hold my right hand,
 Almighty ! hear me, for I ask through Him,
 Whom thou hast heard, whom thou wilt always hear,
 Thy Son, our interceding Great High Priest !
 Reveal the future, let the years to come
 Pass by, and open my ear to hear the harp,
 The prophet harp, whose wisdom I repeat, 70
 Interpreting the voice of distant song ;—
 Which thus again resumes the lofty verse,
 Loftiest, if I interpret faithfully
 The holy numbers which my spirit hears.

Thus came the day, the Harp again began,
 The day that many thought should never come,
 That all the wicked wished should never come,
 That all the righteous had expected long,
 Day greatly feared, and yet too little feared,
 By him who feared it most ; day laughed at much 80
 By the profane, the trembling day of all
 Who laughed ; day when all shadows passed, all
 dreams ;
 When substance, when reality commenced ;
 Last day of lying, final day of all
 Deceit, all knavery, all quackish phrase ;
 Ender of all disputing, of all mirth
 Ungodly, of all loud and boasting speech ;
 Judge of all judgments, Judge of every judge,
 Adjuster of all causes, rights and wrongs ;
 Day oft appealed to, and appealed to oft 90
 By those who saw its dawn with saddest heart ;
 Day most magnificent in Fancy's range,
 Whence she returned, confounded, trembling, pale,
 With overmuch of glory faint and blind ;
 Day most important held, prepared for most,
 By every rational, wise, and holy man ;
 Day of eternal gain, for worldly loss ;
 Day of eternal loss, for worldly gain ;
 Great day of terror, vengeance, wo, despair ,

Revealer of all secrets, thoughts, desires ; 100
 Rein-trying. heart-investigating day,
 That stood between Eternity and Time,
 Reviewed all past, determined all to come,
 And bound all destinies for evermore ;
 Believing day of unbelief, great day,
 That set in proper light the affairs of earth,
 And justified the Government Divine ;
 Great day !—what can we more ? what should we
 more ?

Great triumph day of God's incarnate Son !
 Great day of glory to the Almighty God ! 110
 Day ! whence the everlasting years begin
 Their date, new era in eternity,
 And oft referred to in the song of heaven !

Thus stood the apostate, thus the ransomed stood,
 Those held by justice fast, and these by love,
 Reading the fiery scutcheonry, that blazed
 On high, upon the great celestial bow :
 " As ye have sown, so shall ye reap this day."
 All read, all understood, and all believed,
 Convinced of judgment, righteousness, and sin. 120

Meantime the universe throughout was still.
 The cope, above and round about, was calm ;
 And motionless, beneath them, lay the Earth,
 Silent and sad, as one that sentence waits,
 For flagrant crime ;—when suddenly was heard,
 Behind the azure vaulting of the sky,
 Above, and far remote from reach of sight,
 The sound of trumpets, and the sound of crowds,
 And prancing steeds, and rapid chariot wheels, 130
 That from four quarters rolled, and seemed in haste,
 Assembling at some place of rendezvous ;
 And so they seemed to roll, with furious speed,
 As if none meant to be behind the first.
 Nor seemed alone : that day, the golden trump,
 Whose voice, from centre to circumference
 Of all created things, is heard distinct,

God had bid Michael sound, to summon all
 The hosts of bliss to presence of their King ;
 And, all the morning, millions infinite,
 That millions governed each, Dominions, Powers, 140
 Thrones, Principalities, with all their hosts,
 Had been arriving, near the capital,
 And royal city, New Jerusalem,
 From heaven's remotest bounds. Nor yet from heaven
 Alone came they, that day. The worlds around,
 Or neighbouring nearest on the verge of night,
 Emptied, sent forth their whole inhabitants.
 All tribes of being came, of every name,
 From every coast, filling Jehovah's courts.
 From morn till mid-day, in the squadrons poured 150
 Immense, along the bright celestial roads.
 Swiftly they rode, for love unspeakable,
 To God, and to Messiah, Prince of Peace,
 Drew them, and made obedience haste to be
 Approved. And now, before the Eternal Throne,—
 Brighter, that day, than when the Son prepared
 To overthrow the seraphim rebelled,—
 And circling round the mount of Deity,
 Upon the sea of glass, all round about,
 And down the borders of the stream of life, 160
 And over all the plains of Paradise,
 For many a league of heavenly measurement,—
 Assembled, stood the immortal multitudes,
 Millions, above all number infinite,
 The nations of the blessed. Distinguished each,
 By chief of goodly stature blazing far ;
 By various garb, and flag of various hue
 Streaming through heaven from standard lifted high—
 The arms and imagery of thousand worlds.
 Distinguished each, but all arrayed complete, 170
 In armour bright, of helmet, shield, and sword ;
 And mounted all in chariots of fire.
 A military throng, blent, not confused ;
 As soldiers on some day of great review,
 Burning in splendour of refulgent gold,
 And ornament, on purpose, long devised

For this expected day. Distinguished each,
 But all accounted as became their Lord,
 And high occasion ; all in holiness,
 The livery of the soldiery of God, 180
 Vested ; and shining all with perfect bliss,
 The wages that his faithful servants win.

Thus stood they numberless around the mount
 Of presence ; and, adoring, waited, hushed
 In deepest silence, for the voice of God.
 That moment, all the Sacred Hill on high
 Burned, terrible with glory, and, behind
 The uncreated lustre, hid the Lamb,
 Invisible ; when, from the radiant cloud,
 This voice, addressing all the hosts of heaven, 190
 Proceeded, not in words as we converse,
 Each with his fellow, but in language such
 As God doth use, imparting, without phrase
 Successive, what, in speech of creatures, seems
 Long narrative, though long, yet losing much
 In feeble symbols of the thought Divine.

My servants long approved, my faithful sons,
 Angels of glory, Thrones, Dominions, Powers,
 Well pleased, this morning, I have seen the speed 200
 Of your obedience, gathering round my throne,
 In order due, and well-becoming garb ;
 Illustrious, as I see, beyond your wont,
 As was my wish, to glorify this day :
 And now, what your assembling means, attend.

This day concludes the destiny of man.
 The hour, appointed from eternity,
 To judge the earth, in righteousness, is come ;
 To end the war of Sin, that long has fought,
 Permitted, against the sword of Holiness ;
 To give to men and devils, as their works, 210
 Recorded in my all-remembering book,
 I find ; good to the good, and great reward
 Of everlasting honour, joy, and peace,

Before my presence here for evermore ;
 And to the evil, as their sins provoke,
 Eternal recompense of shame and wo,
 Cast out beyond the bounds of light and love.

Long have I stood, as ye, my sons, well know,
 Between the cherubim, and stretched my arms
 Of mercy out, inviting all to come 220
 To me, and live ; my bowels long have moved
 With great compassion ; and my justice passed
 Transgression by, and not imputed sin.
 Long here, upon my everlasting throne,
 I have beheld my love and mercy scorned ;
 Have seen my laws despised, my name blasphemed,
 My providence accused, my gracious plans
 Opposed ; and long, too long, have I beheld
 The wicked triumph, and my saints reproached
 Maliciously, while on my altars lie, 230
 Unanswered still, their prayers and their tears,
 That seek my coming, wearied with delay ;
 And long, Disorder in my moral reign
 Has walked rebelliously, disturbed the peace
 Of my eternal government, and wrought
 Confusion, spreading far and wide, among
 My works inferior, which groan to be
 Released. Nor long shall groan. The hour of grace,
 The final hour of grace, is fully passed ;
 The time accepted for repentance, faith 240
 And pardon, is irrevocably passed ;
 And Justice, unaccompanied, as wont,
 With Mercy, now goes forth, to give to all
 According to their deeds. Justice alone,—
 For why should Mercy any more be joined ?
 What hath not mercy, mixed with judgment, done,
 That mercy, mixed with judgment and reproof,
 Could do ? Did I not revelation make,
 Plainly and clearly, of my will entire ?
 Before them set my holy law, and gave 250
 Them knowledge, wisdom, prowess to obey,
 And win, by self-wrought works, eternal life ?

Rebelled, did I not send them terms of peace,
Which, not my justice, but my mercy asked ?—
Terms, costly to my well-beloved Son ;
To them, gratuitous, exacting faith
Alone for pardon, works evincing faith ?
Have I not early risen, and sent my seers,
Prophets, apostles, teachers, ministers,
With signs and wonders, working in my name ? 260
Have I not still, from age to age, raised up,
As I saw needful, great, religious men,
Gifted by me with large capacity,
And by my arm omnipotent upheld,
To pour the numbers of my mercy forth,
And roll my judgments on the ear of man ?
And lastly, when the promised hour was come,—
What more could most abundant mercy do ?—
Did I not send Immanuel forth, my Son,
Only begotten, to purchase, by his blood, 270
As many as believed upon his name ?
Did he not die to give repentance, such
As I accept, and pardon of all sins ?
Has he not taught, beseeched, and shed abroad
The Spirit unconfined, and given at times
Example fierce of wrath and judgment, poured
Vindictively on nations guilty long ?
What means of reformation, that my Son
Has left behind, untried ? what plainer words,
What arguments more strong, as yet remain ? 280
Did he not tell them, with his lips of truth,
The righteous should be saved, the wicked damned ?
And has he not, awake both day and night,
Here interceded with prevailing voice,
At my right hand, pleading his precious blood,
Which magnified my holy law, and bought,
For all who wished, perpetual righteousness ?
And have not you, my faithful servants, all
Been frequent forth, obedient to my will,
With messages of mercy and of love, 290
Administering my gifts to sinful man ?
And have not all my mercy, all my love.

Been sealed and stamped with signature of heaven?
 By proof of wonders, miracles, and signs
 Attested, and attested more by truth
 Divine, inherent in the tidings sent?
 This day declares the consequence of all.
 Some have believed, are sanctified, and saved,
 Prepared for dwelling in this holy place,
 In these their mansions, built before my face ; 300
 And now, beneath a crown of golden light,
 Beyond our wall, at place of judgment, they,
 Expecting, wait the promised, due reward.
 The others stand with Satan bound in chains,
 The others, who refused to be redeemed :
 They stand, unsanctified, unpardoned, sad,
 Waiting the sentence that shall fix their wo.
 The others, who refused to be redeemed ;
 For all had grace sufficient to believe,
 All who my gospel heard ; and none who heard 310
 It not, shall by its law, this day, be tried.
 Necessity of sinning, my decrees
 Imposed on none ; but rather, all inclined
 To holiness ; and grace was bountiful,
 Abundant, overflowing with my word ;
 My word of life and peace, which to all men,
 Who shall or stand or fall, by law revealed,
 Was offered freely, as 'twas freely sent,
 Without all money, and without all price.
 Thus they have all, by willing act, despised 320
 Me, and my Son, and sanctifying Spirit.
 But now, no longer shall they mock or scorn.
 The day of grace and mercy is complete,
 And Godhead from their misery absolved.

So saying, He, the Father infinite,
 Turning, addressed Messiah, where he sat,
 Exalted gloriously, at his right hand.
 This day belongs to justice and to thee,
 Eternal Son, thy right for service done,
 Abundantly fulfilling all my will ; 330
 By promise thine, from all eternity,

Made in the ancient Covenant of Grace ;
And thine, as most befitting, since in thee
Divine and human meet, impartial Judge,
Consulting thus the interest of both.
Go then, my Son, divine similitude,
Image express of Deity unseen,
The book of my remembrance take ; and take
The golden crowns of life, due to the saints ;
And take the seven last thunders ruinous ; 340
Thy armour take ; gird on thy sword, thy sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved, till now,
Unsheathed, in the eternal armoury ;
And mount the living chariot of God.
Thou goest not now, as once, to Calvary,
To be insulted, buffeted, and slain ;
Thou goest not now, with battle and the voice
Of war, as once against the rebel hosts.
Thou goest a Judge, and findst the guilty bound ,
Thou goest to prove, condemn, acquit, reward. 350
Not unaccompanied ; all these, my saints,
Go with thee, glorious retinue, to sing
Thy triumph, and participate thy joy ;
And I, the Omnipresent, with thee go ;
And with thee all the glory of my throne.

Thus said the Father ; and the Son beloved,
Omnipotent, Omniscient, Fellow God,
Arose, resplendent with Divinity ;
And He the book of God's remembrance took ;
And took the seven last thunders ruinous ; 360
And took the crowns of life, due to the saints ;
His armour took ; girt on his sword, his sword
Of justice ultimate, reserved, till now,
Unsheathed, in the eternal armoury ;
And up the living chariot of God
Ascended, signifying all complete.

And now the Trump, of wondrous melody,
By man or angel never heard before,
Sounded with thunder, and the march began,

Not swift, as cavalcade, on battle bent, 370
 But, as became procession of a judge,
 Solemn, magnificent, majestic, slow ;
 Moving sublime with glory infinite,
 And numbers infinite, and awful song,
 They passed the gate of heaven, which, many a league,
 Opened either way, to let the glory forth
 Of this great march. And now, the sons of men
 Beheld their coming, which, before, they heard ;
 Beheld the glorious countenance of God !
 All light was swallowed up, all objects seen 380
 Faded ; and the Incarnate, visible
 Alone, held every eye upon him fixed ;
 The wicked saw his majesty severe ;
 And those who pierced Him saw his face with clouds
 Of glory circled round, essential bright !
 And to the rocks and mountains called in vain,
 'To hide them from the fierceness of his wrath .
 Almighty power their flight restrained, and held
 Them bound immovable before the bar.

The righteous, undismayed and bold,—best proof, 390
 This day, of fortitude sincere,—sustained
 By inward faith, with acclamations loud,
 Received the coming of the Son of Man ;
 And, drawn by love, inclined to his approach,
 Moving to meet the brightness of his face.

Meantime, 'tween good and bad, the Judge his
 wheels
 Stayed, and, ascending, sat upon the great
 White Throne, that morning founded there by power
 Omnipotent, and built on righteousness
 And truth. Behind, before, on every side, 400
 In native and reflected blaze of bright,
 Celestial equipage, the myriads stood,
 That with his marching came ; rank above rank,
 Rank above rank, with shield and flaming sword.

'Twas silence all ! and quick, on right and left,
 A mighty angel spread the book of God's

Remembrance ; and, with conscience now sincere
 All men compared the record, written there
 By finger of Omniscience ; and received
 Their sentence, in themselves, of joy or wo ; 410
 Condemned or justified, while yet the Judge
 Waited, as if to let them prove themselves.
 The righteous, in the book of life displayed,
 Rejoicing, read their names ; rejoicing, read
 Their faith for righteousness received, and deeds
 Of holiness, as proof of faith complete.
 The wicked, in the book of endless death,
 Spread out to left, bewailing, read their names ;
 And read beneath them, Unbelief, and fruit
 Of unbelief, vile, unrepented deeds, 420
 Now unrepentable for evermore ;
 And gave approval of the wo affixed.

This done, the Omnipotent, Omniscient Judge,
 Rose infinite, the sentence to pronounce,
 The sentence of eternal wo or bliss !
 All glory heretofore scen or conceived,
 All majesty, annihilated, dropped,
 That moment, from remembrance, and was lost ;
 And silence, deepest hitherto esteemed,
 Seemed noisy to the stillness of this hour. 430
 Comparisons I seek not, nor should find,
 If sought. That silence, which all being held,
 When God's Almighty Son, from off the walls
 Of heaven the rebel angels threw, accursed,
 So still, that all creation heard their fall
 Distinctly, in the lake of burning fire,—
 Was now forgotten, and every silence else.
 All being rational, created then,
 Around the judgment seat, intensely listened.
 No creature breathed. Man, angel, devil, stood 440
 And listened ; the spheres stood still, and every star
 Stood still, and listened ; and every particle,
 Remotest in the womb of matter, stood,
 Bending to hear, devotional and still.
 And thus upon the wicked, first, the Judge

Pronounced the sentence, written before of old.
 "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the fire,
 Prepared eternal in the Gulf of Hell,
 Where ye shall weep and wail for evermore,
 Reaping the harvest which your sins have sown." 450

So saying, God grew dark with utter wrath;
 And, drawing now the sword, undrawn before,
 Which through the range of infinite, all around,
 A gleam of fiery indignation threw,
 He lifted up his hand omnipotent,
 And down among the damned the burning edge
 Plunged; and from forth his arrowy quiver sent,
 Emptied, the seven last thunders ruinous,
 Which, entering, withered all their souls with fire.
 Then first was vengeance, first was ruin seen! 460
 Red, unrestrained, vindictive, final, fierce!
 They, howling, fled to west among the dark;
 But fled not these the terrors of the Lord.
 Pursued, and driven beyond the Gulf, which frowns
 Impassable, between the good and bad,
 And downward far remote to left, oppressed
 And scorched with the avenging fires, begun
 Burning within them,—they upon the verge
 Of Erebus, a moment, pausing stood,
 And saw, below, the unfathomable lake, 470
 Tossing with tides of dark, tempestuous wrath;
 And would have looked behind; but greater wrath,
 Behind, forbade, which now no respite gave
 To final misery. God, in the grasp
 Of his Almighty strength, took them upraised,
 And threw them down, into the yawning pit
 Of bottomless perdition, ruined, damned,
 Fast bound in chains of darkness evermore,
 And Second Death, and the Undying Worm,
 Opening their horrid jaws, with hideous yell, 480
 Falling, received their everlasting prey.
 A groan returned, as down they sunk, and sunk,
 And ever sunk, among the utter dark!
 A groan returned! the righteous heard the groan,

The groan of all the reprobate, when first
 They felt damnation sure ! and heard Hell close !
 And heard Jehovah, and his love retire !
 A groan returned ! the righteous heard the groan,
 As if all misery, all sorrow, grief,
 All pain, all anguish, all despair, which all 490
 Have suffered, or shall feel, from first to last
 Eternity, had gathered to one pang,
 And issued in one groan of boundless wo !

And now the wall of hell, the outer wall,
 First gateless then, closed round them ; that which thou
 Hast seen, of fiery adamant, emblazed
 With hideous imagery, above all hope,
 Above all flight of fancy, burning high,
 And guarded evermore, by Justice, turned
 To Wrath, that hears, unmoved, the endless groan 500
 Of those wasting within ; and sees, unmoved,
 The endless tear of vain repentance fall.

Nor ask if these shall ever be redeemed.
 They never shall ! Not God, but their own sin,
 Condemns them. What could be done, as thou hast
 heard,
 Has been already done ; all has been tried,
 That wisdom infinite, and boundless grace,
 Working together, could devise ; and all
 Has failed. Why now succeed ? Though God should
 stoop,
 Inviting still, and send his Only Son 510
 To offer grace in hell, the pride, that first
 Refused, would still refuse ; the unbelief,
 Still unbelieving, would deride and mock ;
 Nay more, refuse, deride, and mock ; for sin
 Increasing still, and growing, day and night,
 Into the essence of the soul, become
 All sin, makes what in time seemed probable,—
 Seemed probable, since God invited them,—
 For ever now impossible. Thus they,
 According to the eternal laws which bind 520

All creatures, bind the Uncreated One,
Though we name not the sentence of the Judge,—
Must daily grow in sin and punishment,
Made by themselves their necessary lot,
Unchangeable to all eternity.

What lot ! what choice ! I sing not, cannot sing.
Here, highest seraphs tremble on the lyre,
And make a sudden pause !—but thou hast seen.
And here, the bard, a moment, held his hand,
As one who saw more of that horrid wo 530
Than words could utter ; and again resumed.

Nor yet had vengeance done. The guilty Earth,
Inanimate, debased, and stained by sin,
Seat of rebellion, of corruption, long,
And tainted with mortality throughout,—
God sentenced next ; and sent the final fires
Of ruin forth, to burn and to destroy.
The saints its burning saw, and thou mayst see.
Look yonder, round the lofty golden walls
And galleries of New Jerusalem, 540
Among the imagery of wonders passed ;
Look near the southern gate ; look, and behold—
On spacious canvass, touched with living hues—
The Conflagration of the ancient earth,
The handiwork of high archangel, drawn
From memory of what he saw, that day.
See ! how the mountains, how the valleys burn,
The Andes burn, the Alps, the Apennines,
Taurus and Atlas ; all the islands burn ;
The Ocean burns, and rolls his waves of flame. 550
See how the lightnings, barbed, red with wrath,
Sent from the quiver of Omnipotence,
Cross and recross the fiery gloom, and burn
Into the centre !—burn without, within,
And help the native fires, which God awoke,
And kindled with the fury of his wrath.
As inly troubled, now she seems to shake ;
The flames, dividing, now, a moment, fall ;

And now, in one conglomerated mass,
 Rising, they glow on high, prodigious blaze ! 560
 Then fall and sink again, as if, within,
 The fuel, burned to ashes, was consumed.
 So burned the Earth upon that dreadful day,
 Yet not to full annihilation burned.
 The essential particles of dust remained,
 Purged, by the final, sanctifying fires,
 From all corruption ; from all stain of sin,
 Done there by man or devil, purified.
 The essential particles remained, of which
 God built the world again, renewed, improved, 570
 With fertile vale, and wood of fertile bough ;
 And streams of milk and honey, flowing song ;
 And mountains cinctured with perpetual green ;
 In clime and season fruitful, as at first,
 When Adam woke, unfallen, in Paradise.
 And God, from out the fount of native light,
 A handful took of beams, and clad the sun
 Again in glory ; and sent forth the moon
 To borrow thence her wonted rays, and lead
 Her stars, the virgin daughters of the sky. 580
 And God revived the winds, revived the tides ;
 And, touching her from his Almighty hand,
 With force centrifugal, she onward ran,
 Coursing her wonted path, to stop no more.
 Delightful scene of new inhabitants !
 As thou, this morn, in passing hither, sawst.

Thus done, the glorious Judge, turning to right,
 With countenance of love unspeakable,
 Beheld the righteous, and approved them thus :
 " Ye blessed of my Father, come, ye just, 590
 Enter the joy eternal of your Lord ;
 Receive your crowns, ascend, and sit with me,
 At God's right hand, in glory evermore !"

Thus said the Omnipotent, Incarnate God ;
 And waited not the homage of the crowns,
 Already thrown before him ; nor the loud

Amen of universal, holy praise ;
 But turned the living chariot of fire,
 And swifter now,—as joyful to declare
 This day's proceedings in his Father's court, 600
 And to present the number of his sons
 Before the Throne,—ascended up to heaven,
 And all his saints, and all his angel bands,
 As, glorious, they on high ascended, sung
 Glory to God and to the Lamb!—they sung
 Messiah, fairer than the sons of men,
 And altogether lovely. Grace is poured
 Into thy lips, above all measure poured ;
 And therefore God hath blessed thee evermore
 Gird, gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou 610
 Most Mighty ! with thy glory ride ; with all
 Thy majesty, ride prosperously, because
 Of meekness, truth, and righteousness. Thy throne,
 O God, for ever and for ever stands ;
 The sceptre of thy kingdom still is right ;
 Therefore hath God, thy God, anointed thee
 With oil of gladness and perfumes of myrrh,
 Out of the ivory palaces, above
 Thy fellows, crowned the Prince of endless peace !
 [620

Thus sung they God, their Saviour : and themselves
 Prepared complete to enter now, with Christ,
 Their living Head, into the Holy Place.
 Behold ! the daughter of the King, the bride,
 All glorious within, the bride adorned,
 Comely in broidery of gold ! behold,
 She comes, apparelled royally, in robes
 Of perfect righteousness, fair as the sun,
 With all her virgins, her companions fair,—
 Into the Palace of the King she comes,
 She comes to dwell for evermore ! Awake, 630
 Eternal harps ! awake, awake, and sing !—
 The Lord, the Lord, our God Almighty, reigns !

Thus the Messiah, with the hosts of bliss,
 Entered the gates of heaven, unquestioned now,

Which closed behind them, to go out no more ;
And stood, accepted, in his Father's sight ;
Before the glorious, everlasting Throne,
Presenting all his saints ; not one was lost.
Of all that he in Covenant received ;
And, having given the kingdom up, he sat, 640
Where now he sits and reigns, on the right hand
Of glory ; and our God is all in all !

Thus have I sung beyond thy first request,
Rolling my numbers o'er the track of man,
The world at dawn, at mid-day, and decline ;
Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned,
And God's eternal government approved.







